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1

**GOLD EAR ORNAMENT OR
PENDANT, SUMBA, NUSA
TENGGARA ISLANDS, INDONESIA**

Height: 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ in (8.6 cm)

PROVENANCE
American Private Collection

\$ 3,000-5,000



2

INDONESIAN SCULPTURE FROM AN IMPORTANT
EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**GOLD ALLOY PECTORAL, SUMBA,
NUSA TENGGARA ISLANDS,
INDONESIA**

Width: 14 $\frac{3}{8}$ in (36.5 cm)

PROVENANCE
European Private Collection

\$ 4,000-6,000



PRE-COLUMBIAN SCULPTURE FROM AN IMPORTANT
EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**COCLÉ GOLD DOUBLE
PENDANT OF MUSICIANS
CIRCA AD 800-1500**

Width: 3 1/4 in (8.3 cm)

PROVENANCE

Malcolm Delacorte, Cornwall, New York
European Private Collection, acquired from the above
on May 8, 1981
Thence by descent

\$ 15,000-25,000



Identical double figures are a classic genre of Isthmus goldwork, seen in Diquís, Veraguas and Coclé figures. The two-figure pendant form may allude to ancestor lineage or the importance of duality respected in all living things. Jones notes that dual images of either paired figures or single figures with two heads are associated with musical iconography (Julie Jones, ed., *The Art of Precolumbian Gold: The Jan Mitchell Collection*, New York, 1985, p. 102).

These ceremonial figures prominently hold conical instruments to their mouths, the deep forms perhaps once inlaid. They each grasp trapezoidal staffs with their slender arms. With coffee-bean-style eyes emitting a trance-like effect, they appear deeply engaged in the ritual. Their naked youthful torsos are finely cast to show musculature and are adorned with serrated flanges from the waistbands and crested headdresses. Each figure has double suspension loops on the back.



PRE-COLUMBIAN SCULPTURE FROM AN IMPORTANT
EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**DIQUÍS GOLD PENDANT OF
DOUBLE FIGURES WITH DANGLES
CIRCA AD 800-1500**

Width: 3 3/8 in (8.6 cm); Height: 2 1/2 in (6.3 cm)

PROVENANCE

Robert Vergnes, Paris
European Private Collection, acquired from the above in 1982
Thence by descent

\$ 15,000-20,000





The twin figures stand side by side with arms bent to the side and holding the braided vertical bands, perhaps representing serpents or snakes. The figures are within the broad horizontal bands top and bottom, a style typical of certain Diquís pendants. The nine rectangular dangles



projecting forward partially obscure the figures for a mysterious effect, as the figures most likely represent deceased warriors or ancestors by their openwork limbs and bodies and large circular pierced eyes. They are adorned solely by a braided headband and waistband.

PRE-COLUMBIAN SCULPTURE FROM AN IMPORTANT
EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

VERAGUAS GOLD AVIAN PENDANT
CIRCA AD 800-1500

Width: 5 7/8 in (14.9cm)

PROVENANCE

André Emmerich, New York (inv. no. CB 277)
Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York, May 12, 1979, lot 280,
consigned by the above
European Private Collection, acquired at the above auction
Thence by descent

\$ 7,000-10,000

With the large outspread tail and wings and taloned feet curled tightly to the rounded chest, this bird pendant is the epitome of the flying raptor style. The lower edges of the wings are trimmed by a thin braided band in contrast to the broad smooth planes of the wings and tail. The neck is adorned with multiple bands and the long slender beak tapers downward. A suspension loop is at the back of the neck.



PRE-COLUMBIAN SCULPTURE FROM AN IMPORTANT
EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**COCLÉ GOLD DOUBLE FIGURAL
PENDANT WITH STAFFS
CIRCA AD 800-1500**

Width: 5 in (12.7 cm); Height: 3 ¾ in (9.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

André Emmerich, New York (inv. no. CF9)
Gimpel-Hanover & André Emmerich Galerien, Zürich
European Private Collection, acquired from the above on
November 14, 1980
Thence by descent

\$ 15,000-25,000



Referred to as the "Twin War God" pendant by Andre Emmerich, this densely cast and dramatic pendant emulates a fierce and powerful aura. The conjoined stylized alligator figures have distinctive tapered bodies ending in slender loops. The sharply turned addorsed heads each show the detailed openwork mouth of rows of triangular teeth, projecting eyes on each side of the squared snouts, and are surmounted by short upcurled scrolls. The inner arms share holding an effigy sceptre and each outer arm is holding a weapon or staff with a large trapezoidal blade. Across each of the figure's chest is a narrow band of braided design. There are two suspension loops on the reverse.

The sharp profile saurian head is a feature often painted on ceramics of highly animated alligator-headed

figures. For a gold double figural pendant holding staffs with tapered tusk-like bodies, see Samuel Kirkland Lothrop, *Archaeology of Southern Veraguas, Panama*, Cambridge, 1950, p. 67, fig. 105a.

The combination of animal and human creatures is one of the key traits of Central American goldwork. Cooke and Bray aptly refer to the numerous identities of the figural ornaments. "Customarily referred to as gods, they are more reasonably interpreted as tribal man-animal culture heroes, mythical warriors, eponymous clan markers or alter egos." (Richard G. Cooke and Warwick Bray, "The Goldwork of Panama: An Iconographic and Chronological Perspective", in Julie Jones, ed., *The Art of Precolumbian Gold: The Jan Mitchell Collection*, New York, 1985, p. 35).



PRE-COLUMBIAN SCULPTURE FROM AN IMPORTANT
EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**LARGE SINÚ GOLD FINIAL
OF A BIRD
CIRCA AD 500-100**

Height: 9 3/4 in (24.8 cm)

PROVENANCE

Paul Tishman, New York, acquired before 1967
European Private Collection, acquired from the above on
January 20, 1980
Thence by descent

\$ 30,000-50,000

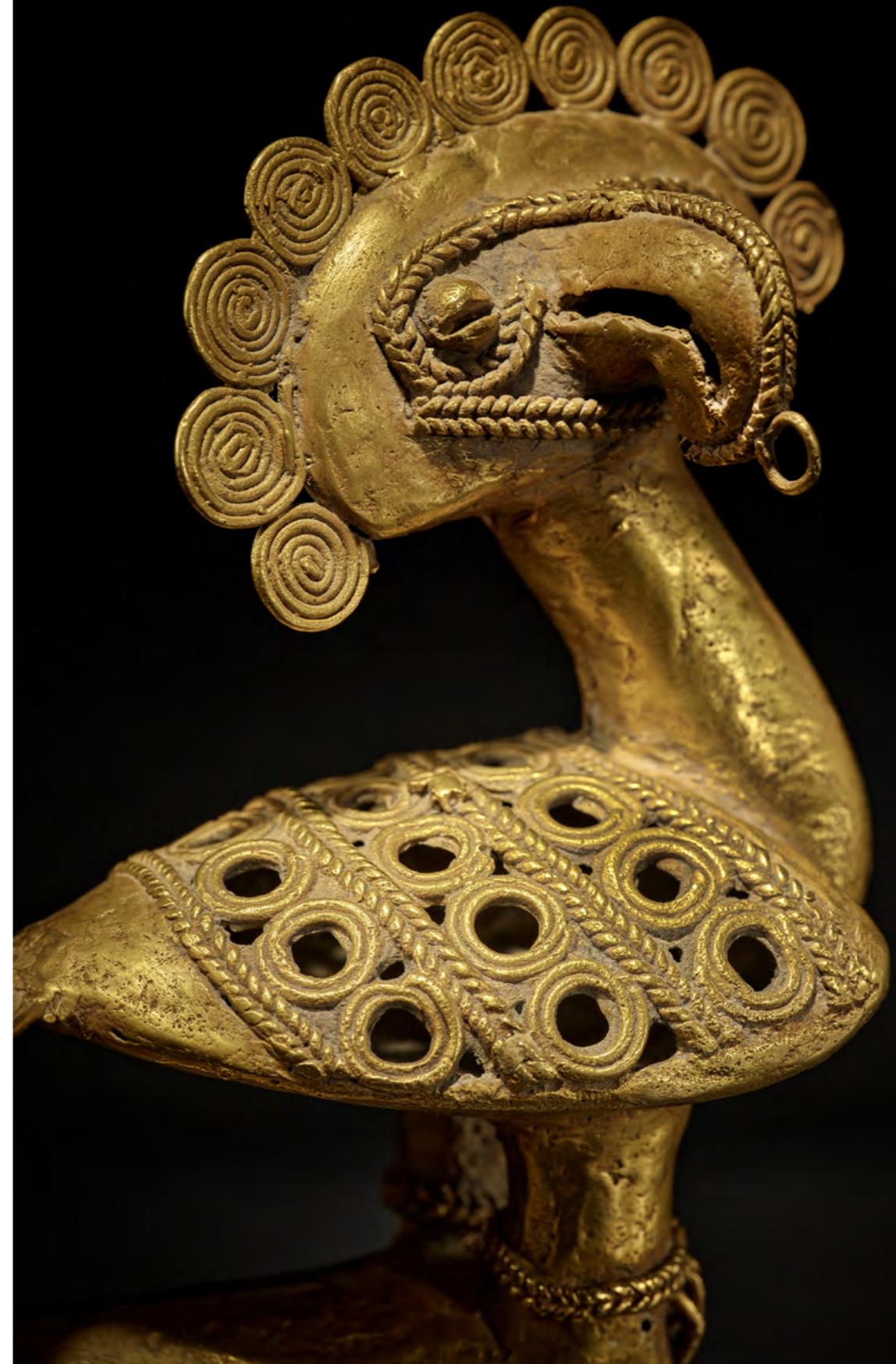


Sinú finials were prominent ornaments for important staffs or scepters. They were cast with naturalistic images of key fauna and fowl of the region that represented different levels of the universe.

This is a particularly large and densely cast finial of a proud avian, likely an owl, distinguished by the broad lunate head trimmed by spirals, long neck, and the teardrop-shaped body marked by three rows of openwork circles separated by faux filigree braided bands. The braided bands are a featured trait of Sinú finials, here marking the sharply recurved beak and encircling the eyes, trimming the bird's legs and the back of the cylindrical shaft. The delicate loop at the tip of the beak is a typical feature of the finials, indicating the possible further adornment by a perishable object.

Sinú art is part of the greater Zenú region which encompasses the Sinú, San Jorge, Nechi, and lower Cauca river valleys. The Spaniards noted the quality and quantity of the goldwork made in this region, which was traded over a wide area. Bray quotes the 16th century account of Juan de Castellanos (1589); Sinú goldsmiths made "figurines of various kinds, aquatic creatures, land animals and birds, ...also javelins with hoops of gold of various sizes, ...and models of flies, spiders, and other unpleasant insects."

(Warwick Bray, *The Gold of Eldorado*, London, 1978, p. 41).
For examples of avian finials, see Ana María Falchetti, *El oro del Gran Zenú. Metalurgia prehispánica en las llanuras del Caribe colombiano*, Bogotá, 1995, pp. 39-40, figs. 1-2, and fig. 2d for a highly similar bird identified as an owl.



PRE-COLUMBIAN SCULPTURE FROM AN IMPORTANT
EUROPEAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**SICÁN GOLD KERO WITH
HEADS AND FROGS
CIRCA AD 900-1100**

Height: 6 in (15.2 cm)

PROVENANCE

Paul Tishman, New York, acquired prior to 1967
European Private Collection, acquired from the above on
January 30, 1980
Thence by descent

\$ 20,000-30,000



Ceremonial cups of the Sicán era were deeply repoussé with iconic images reinforcing their ritual value. On this beaker, four heads of the Sicán deity head encircle the walls above four frogs with outspread feet. The Sicán lord was consistently portrayed with strong comma-shaped eyes and a crescentic headdress. The mere image of his face brings forth his powerful role as a warrior and ruler.

Andean frogs include *Bufo spinulosus*, which live in

river beds of the desert valleys, and the large *Bufo marinus*, from the Pacific Coast. Both amphibians have textured skin as shown on this kero. Frogs had vocal behavior and often appeared mysteriously after hibernating underground. They were valued and respected for their potent serums used as hallucinogenic tools.

For examples of similar beakers, see *World of Ancient Gold*, New York World's Fair, 1964.

PROPERTY FROM A NEW ENGLAND PRIVATE COLLECTION

**CHAVIN STONE CARVED
DOUBLE BEAKER
CIRCA 700-400 BC**

Height: 9 3/4 in (24.8 cm)

PROVENANCE

André Emmerich, New York (inv. no. S9446)
Alan C. Lapiner, Arts of the Four Quarters, Ltd., New York
Private Collection, New England, acquired from the above on
April 16, 1969

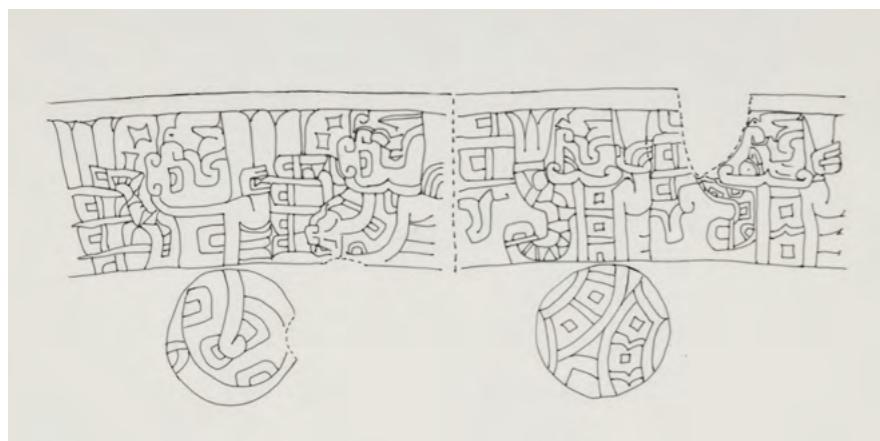
PUBLISHED

Alan C. Lapiner and André Emmerich, *Art of Ancient Peru and Ecuador*, New York, 1968, n.p. cat. no. 2 (illustrated)
Arts of the Four Quarters, Ltd., advertisement, *Art and Archaeology Magazine*, Spring 1969
Alan C. Lapiner, *Pre-Columbian Art of South America*, New York, 1976, p. 66, fig. 124

EXHIBITED

Arts of the Four Quarters, Ltd., New York, *Art of Ancient Peru and Ecuador*, 1968

\$ 8,000-12,000



Drawing by Irene Shekhtman of the present lot.



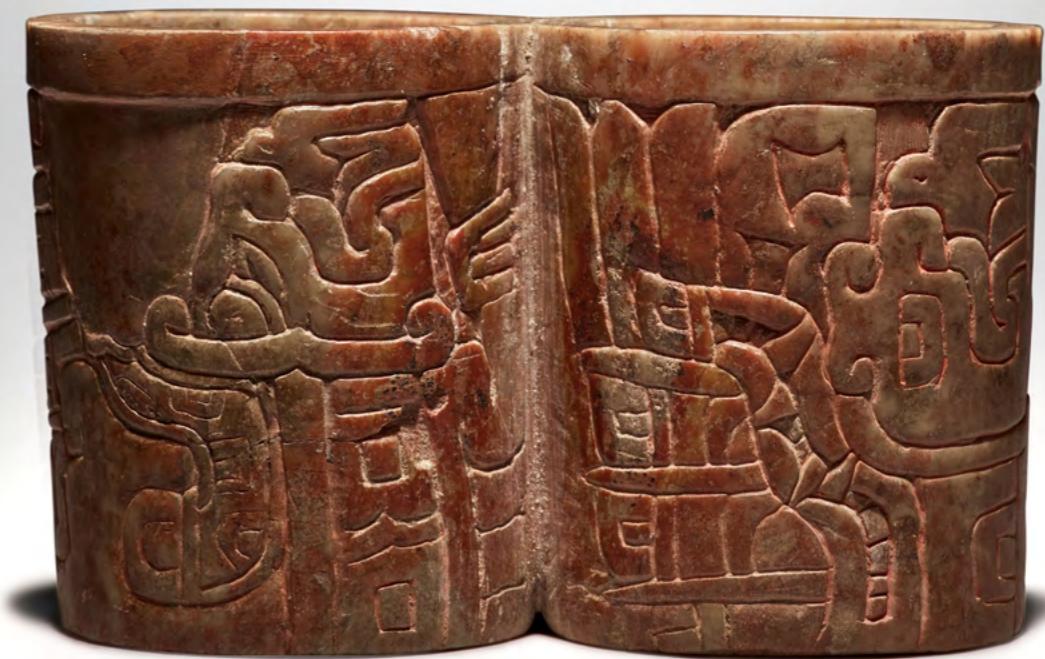
Small portable objects can be powerful tools for disseminating ideology, socio-religious beliefs and important historical narratives. In the Chavin era, steatite cups were prized ritual objects masterfully designed to relay some of the most important iconographic imagery. These portable vessels were an important implement of Chavin rituals that could be traded or easily transported.

The complex and dense imagery completely envelopes the sides and bottom of this small double-vessel, imbuing a functional object with mystical authoritative information. Each chamber is deeply carved continuously on the walls and on the base, with a sinuous and undulating field of two mythical creatures of serpent and feline form. The robust and compact profile heads are turned sharply upward, with snub noses and lunate eyes and pupils typical of felines, and the open mouths appear to have forked tongues curling upward; the spines are decorated with repeat geometric designs that continue onto the base of the cups. One chamber is dominated by tripartite plumes between the heads, the other chamber (now with a plain replacement to fill the missing portion of the wall), has a distinct triple plume issuing from the body, and human hands appear to grasp implements. The sprouting elements may relate to psychotropic substances which could have been prepared within the cups.

The Chavin culture was a complex cultural network dominating the Early Horizon (9th-3rd century BC), extending over the North/Central Peruvian Highlands and coastal region. The monumental site of Chavin de Huantar was the socio-religious epicenter, home of the famous Lanzon monolith, an engraved stone stele over 4 meters tall. Recent research at the site revealed the sophisticated engineering, technical organization, and skill whereby light and sound were manipulated in the construction of the underground tunnels and labyrinths to enhance the experience of entering a sacred space.

For examples of carved stone cups in the collection of Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C., see: [HTTP://MUSEUM.DOAKS.ORG/OBJECTS-1/INFO/22990](http://MUSEUM.DOAKS.ORG/OBJECTS-1/INFO/22990); [HTTP://MUSEUM.DOAKS.ORG/OBJECTS-1/INFO/22989](http://MUSEUM.DOAKS.ORG/OBJECTS-1/INFO/22989); and [HTTP://MUSEUM.DOAKS.ORG/OBJECTS-1/INFO/22517](http://MUSEUM.DOAKS.ORG/OBJECTS-1/INFO/22517). See also Alan C. Lapiner, *Pre-Columbian Art of South America*, New York, 1976, p. 66, fig. 123.

Small stone cups have been noted in contexts with carved bone spatula implements which share some elements of the iconography; see the Haldas and Pallka bone spatulas in Henning Bishof, "Context and Content in Early Chavin Art", in William J. Conklin and Jeffrey Quilter, eds., *Chavin: Art, Architecture and Culture*, Los Angeles, 2008, p. 124, fig. 4.11, particularly for the tripartite sprouting element.



10

PROPERTY FROM THE DONALD AND LUCY BELDOCK COLLECTION

MOCHE COPPER MASK
CIRCA 100 BC-AD 500

Height: 11 3/8 in (28.9 cm)

PROVENANCE

André Emmerich, New York, acquired in 1964 (inv. no. A158)
Donald and Lucy Beldock, New York, acquired from the above
in November 1968

\$ 6,000-8,000

Portrait head vessels are a defining feature of the Moche culture, as Donnan notes "Moche portraits are among the most varied, objective and confident portraits produced by any civilization of the ancient world." (Christopher Donnan, *Moche Portraits from Ancient Peru*, Austin, 2004, p. 3).

The calm and confident expression on this youthful face of large upraised eyes, pursed lips, and well-modeled cheeks showing scarification are classic elements of this distinctive genre of Moche pottery. It is made in the stirrup-spout form which could hold liquid. This dignitary wears a simple head cloth wrapped close to the head.



11

PROPERTY FROM THE DONALD AND LUCY BELDOCK COLLECTION

MOCHE COPPER MASK
CIRCA 100 BC-AD 500

Width: 7 in (17.8 cm)

PROVENANCE

Alan C. Lapiner, Arts of the Four Quarters, Ltd., New York
André Emmerich, New York, acquired from the above in
August 1968 (inv. no. AS170)
Donald and Lucy Beldock, New York, acquired from the above
in November 1968

\$ 3,000-5,000

Masks were a key component of the ceremonial regalia for rulers and dignitaries in ritual ceremonial and for funerary attire. They are modeled by the repoussé technique to give the overall form and facial details, and then embellished with attached headband ornaments and inlays of shell or stone in the eyes.

This mask emits an emotional and inquisitive expression in the arched concentric brows deeply repoussé and the recessed pupils perhaps once inlaid.



PROPERTY FROM THE DONALD AND LUCY BELDOCK COLLECTION

SICÁN GOLD MASK
CIRCA AD 900-1100

Width: 11 3/8 in (28.9 cm)

PROVENANCE

Alan C. Lapiner, Arts of the Four Quarters, Ltd., New York
André Emmerich, New York, acquired from the above in
December 1966 (inv. no. A380)
Donald and Lucy Beldock, New York, acquired from the above
in December 1968

\$ 7,000-10,000

The stylized face of the "Sicán lord" is an iconic image best known from their consistent portrayal on such masks and as seen on cylinder beakers. Here the lively upturned comma-shaped eyes are carefully rimmed for emphasis, the nose is finely sculpted in repoussé and the checks are gracefully outlined, indicating age. The mouth is a straight short line, and ear flanges show circular ornaments at the base.

The Sicán had a prolific metallurgy tradition based on techniques refined by the earlier Moche people. Some Sicán masks were adorned with gem-tipped stalks from the eyes, circular dangles, and deep red cinnabar pigment. While such embellishments may vanish, the essential elements of the Sicán lord's face are finely portrayed in this example.



OLMEC ART: MYTH AND METAPHOR IN PRECLASSIC SCULPTURE

The Preclassic era (1200-300 BC) witnessed the creation of one of the most dynamic traditions of stone and ceramic sculpture in Mesoamerica. Olmec art, once little understood, now is praised for the "the extraordinary beauty, power and technical brilliance of the portable objects, and the seminal importance to the development of later Mesoamerican civilizations." (Allen Rosenbaum, *Foreword* in Michael D. Coe, ed., *Olmec World, Ritual and Rulership*, Princeton, 1995, p. VIII).

The Olmec and Preclassic sculptures presented here are from one of the great American private collections of this genre. Consisting mostly of small scale figures and objects, the collection was featured in the major exhibition *Olmec World, Ritual and Rulership*, shown at The Art Museum of Princeton University, and The Museum of Fine

Arts, Houston in 1995-1996. Roberta Smith noted "[...] The Olmec are thought to have used a version of the golden section in proportioning their [...] figures giving even the smallest an unusual monumentality, and reinforcing natural form with subtle geometry. (Roberta Smith, "The Olmec World, A Forgotten People, Distant Only in Time", *New York Times*, January 26, 1996).

The sculptures are powerful representations of Olmec mythology and metaphor. Included are objects of status, naturalistic figures, and sculptures revealing the transformation of humans into animal spirits. Displaying transformation was the ultimate power of the shaman/ruler, the primary vehicle for political and social validation. This important collection celebrates the integrity and artistry of Olmec art.



13

PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

OLMEC STONE HEAD OF A FELINE
MIDDLE PRECLASSIC,
CIRCA 900-600 BC

Height: 4 7/8 in (12.4 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection

American Private Collection, acquired from the above in
March 1979

EXHIBITED

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, *Ancient Americas*, long-
term loan, 2001-2011

\$ 5,000-7,000



The voluminous rounded pendant dramatically portrays the stylized head of a snarling feline. The deeply recessed oval eyes are incised with pupils rolled upward, the snout has tightly curled nostrils and rounded taut cheeks. The wide mouth is carved and incised with a row of teeth and fangs. The top of the head has a heart-shaped motif as if the end of the feline's tail is curled forward. The back is deeply drilled in a circular recess with two large suspension holes on the side.



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

OLMEC STANDING FIGURE
MIDDLE PRECLASSIC,
CIRCA 900-600 BC

Height: 4 7/8 in (12.4 cm)

PROVENANCE

Raúl Kamffer, Kamffer Gallery, Mexico City
Private Collection, acquired from the above in 1966
By descent to the family of the present owner in 1989

PUBLISHED

Michael D. Coe, ed. *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*,
Princeton, 1995, p. 150, cat. no. 21

EXHIBITED

The Art Museum, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*, December 16, 1995 - February 25, 1996; additional venue: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, April 14 - June 9, 1996
The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, *Ancient America*, long-term loan, 2001-2011

\$ 7,000-10,000



The relaxed standing posture is a classic form of the Olmec meditative stance and is believed to be one stage of a transformation process. Here the legs are slightly bent and arms are held slightly away from the torso loosely by the side. The slender shoulders are slightly pulled back indicating his internal motion. His large and robust face show parted trapezoidal lips, a broad nose, and narrowed recessed eyes with a drilled pupil indicated in the left socket. The figure is carved in a deep greenish-black serpentine and polished to a glistening surface.



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**OLMEC JADE HEAD
OF AN ELDERLY MAN
MIDDLE PRECLASSIC,
CIRCA 900-600 BC**

Height: 1 1/2 in (3.8 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection
American Private Collection, acquired from the above in
November 1965

PUBLISHED

Michael D. Coe, ed. *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*,
Princeton, 1995, p. 299, cat. no. 214

EXHIBITED

The Art Museum, Princeton University, Princeton, New
Jersey, *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*, December 16,
1995 - February 25, 1996; additional venue: The Museum of
Fine Arts, Houston, April 14 - June 9, 1996
The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, *Ancient America*, long-
term loan, 2001-2011

\$ 5,000-7,000



This remarkable portrait of a bearded old man conveys his sage humanity. He looks out from recessed eyes set well under the brows and has high cheekbones above the lined sunken cheeks and a straight narrowed mouth. The nose is pierced at the septum by the precision of a master carver. The figure, likely in a seated posture, was carved in mottled green jade and polished to an even sheen.

Bearded figures are usually associated with transformation. For similarly aged visages, see Michael D. Coe, ed. *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*, Princeton, 1995, p. 299, cat. nos. 213 and 215.



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**OLMEC STONE FIGURE
OF A KNEELING MAN,
MIDDLE PRECLASSIC,
CIRCA 900-600 BC**

Height: 8 3/8 in (21.3 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, acquired in 1957
William Spratling (1900-1967), Taxco el Viejo
Private Collection
American Private Collection, acquired from the above in 1958

PUBLISHED

Jean M. Borgatti and Richard Brilliant, *Likeness and Beyond: Portraits from Africa and the World*, New York, 1990, p. 149, cat. no. 96
Michael D. Coe, ed. *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*, Princeton, 1995, p. 143, cat. no. 13

EXHIBITED

The Center for African Art, New York, *Likeness and Beyond: Portraits from Africa and the World*, February 14 - August 12, 1990; additional venue: The Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, September 16 - November 11, 1990
The Art Museum, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*, December 16, 1995 - February 25, 1996; additional venue: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, April 14 - June 9, 1996

\$ 30,000-50,000



This figure is one of a small and important corpus of kneeling figures, all portraying confident and authoritative individuals, often bearded. The kneeling position has been identified with shamanic transformation, and this corpus of figures uses the posture to reference power and status.

The power and strength of this bearded figure are aptly conveyed by his robust and compact musculature and the engaging thrust of the head. Carved with deeply set eyes perhaps once inlaid, the mouth is gently relaxed. The coiffure is crosshatched on the front half and transitions to finely striated locks down the back of the head. His chest is carefully modeled to show the ribcage and pectorals; the hands press down on the knees and the feet are folded beneath him.

Olmec art is grounded on the human figure and the manifestations it can assume through the mystical power of transformation. The shaman/ruler was the actor who connected to the supernatural and cosmic forces that ensured the rain and the harvest. The performative actions,

whether in a distilled human form or the otherworldly appearance of stages of transformation, reinforced the status and authority of the ruler. The ability, even the suggestion of possible transformation, was ultimately a highly effective and powerful means of communication.

"Transformation is the central mystery of Olmec ideology and ritual, and informs the art style at its most fundamental level." (Michael D. Coe, ed., *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*, Princeton, 1995, p. 126).

For the other figures of this genre in museum collections, see Michael D. Coe, ed., *ibid.*, p. 142, cat. no. 12 for the figure in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; p. 144, cat. no. 14 for the figure in The Cleveland Museum of Art; p. 170, cat. no. 42 for the figure in the Princeton University Art Museum; and p. 171, cat. no. 43 for the figure at Tulane University, New Orleans; for two figures in the more advanced stage of this posture, see p. 172, cat. no. 44, and p. 174, cat. no. 46.



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**OLMEC STONE CELT
WITH A CARVED FACE,
MIDDLE PRECLASSIC,
CIRCA 900-600 BC**

Height: 5 5/8 in (14.3 cm)

PROVENANCE

Raúl Kamffer, acquired in the 1960s
American Private Collection, acquired from the above in 1984

PUBLISHED

Michael D. Coe, ed. *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*,
Princeton, 1995, p. 205, cat. no. 95

EXHIBITED

The Art Museum, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*, December 16, 1995 - February 25, 1996; additional venue: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, April 14 - June 9, 1996

\$ 25,000-35,000

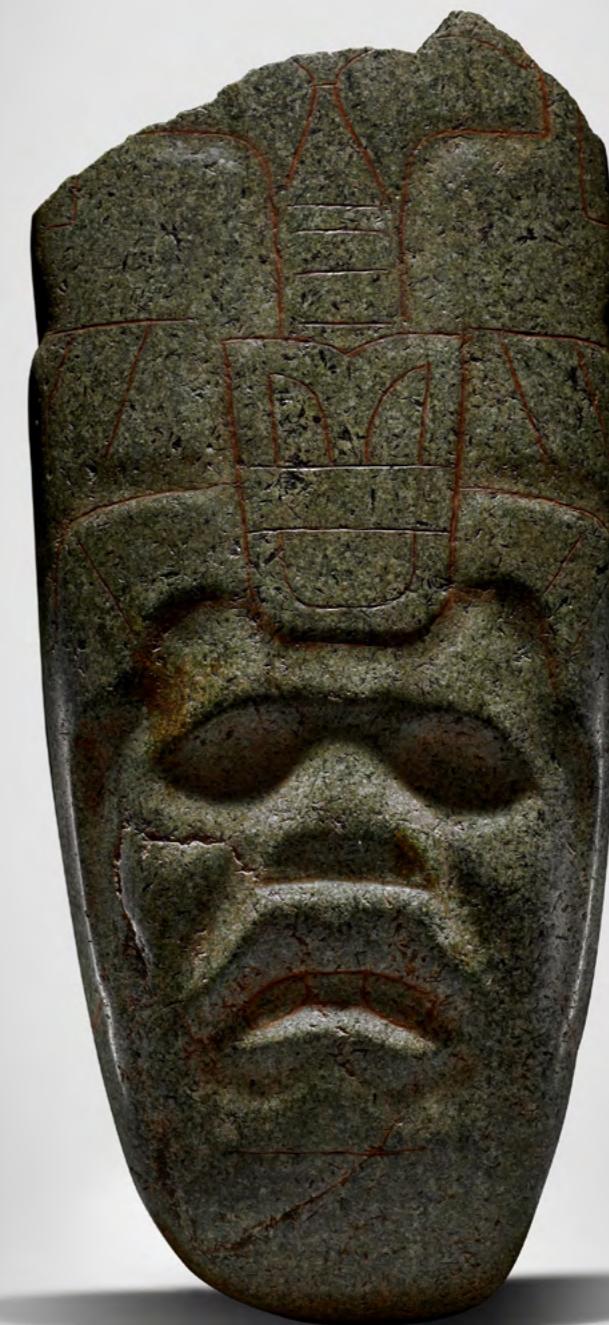
"The fiercest manifestation of the supernatural is carved on the heft of effigy axes." (Michael D. Coe, ed. *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*, Princeton, 1995, p. 197).

Stone celts were an elemental agricultural tool that became an elevated symbol of power when they were animated and transformed with carved and incised images. The modified celts were held by rulers to signify their access to supernatural power.

Depictions of the Olmec Supernatural, the mythic deity based on the were-jaguar image who is ultimately connected to maize and rain, are carved in various forms on stone celts, some as full figures, others such as this example, simply by the diagnostic face. Perhaps the most famous example is the Kunz jade axe in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

This massive greenstone celt is gently carved with

the face of the Olmec Supernatural and incised with the headband of insignia featuring the sprouted maize symbol. The face is still decidedly human, the full parted lips are suggestive of the trapezoidal mouth and the upper lip presses into the base of the nose, the sunken eyes suggest a slight frown. The expanding celt becomes the massive headdress or helmet, divided into tiers. The main element is a bifurcated maize sprout with a larger sprout issuing upward. This overall tripartite element is secured with horizontal bands, the whole is incised with fine lines. Two sets of fine-incised parallel diagonal lines on the bands are similar to the skybands depicted in other Olmec art. The suggestion is the celt represents a tripartite cosmos, the maize as it grows into the sky and the ruler below maintains the harvest. See discussion in Michael D. Coe, ed., *ibid.*, p. 206; for other celts see pp. 201-204, cat. nos. 90-93.



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**OLMEC STONE SEATED FIGURE,
MIDDLE PRECLASSIC,
CIRCA 900-600 BC**

Height: 5 5/8 in (14.3 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection
Raúl Kamffer, Kamffer Gallery, Mexico City
American Private Collection, acquired from the above in July
1967

PUBLISHED

Michael D. Coe, ed. *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*,
Princeton, 1995, p. 155, cat. no. 27

EXHIBITED

The Art Museum, Princeton University, Princeton, New
Jersey, *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*, December 16,
1995 - February 25, 1996; additional venue: The Museum of
Fine Arts, Houston, April 14 - June 9, 1996

\$ 15,000-25,000

The mysterious presence of this figure resides in the powerful depiction of the head wearing a wide oval mouth mask, that may be part of a larger face mask. The wearing of a mask and this particular style of a seated posture indicates a ritual ceremony.

The deeply drilled eyes are highlighted by red cinnabar which accents the grooved areas of the minimally carved hands and modeled arms. The blocky lower body tapers erectly to the slender shoulders and the legs are folded completely one atop the other with the hands resting

on the knees. The olive-green pale serpentine is highly polished to a glowing finish, which continues on the roughened top of the head. This patch appears to be a deliberate presentation of the raw stone that was included in the finishing polish.

For an Olmec jade head displaying similar full lips, possibly a mouth mask, see Elizabeth P. Benson and Beatriz de la Fuente, eds., *Olmec Art of Ancient Mexico*, Washington, D.C., 1996, p. 156, pl. 33.





PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

OLMEC JADE INCISED TORSO
MIDDLE PRECLASSIC,
CIRCA 900-600 BC

Height: 3 3/8 in (8.6 cm)

PROVENANCE

William Spratling (1900-1967)
Private Collection
American Private Collection, acquired from the above in 1981

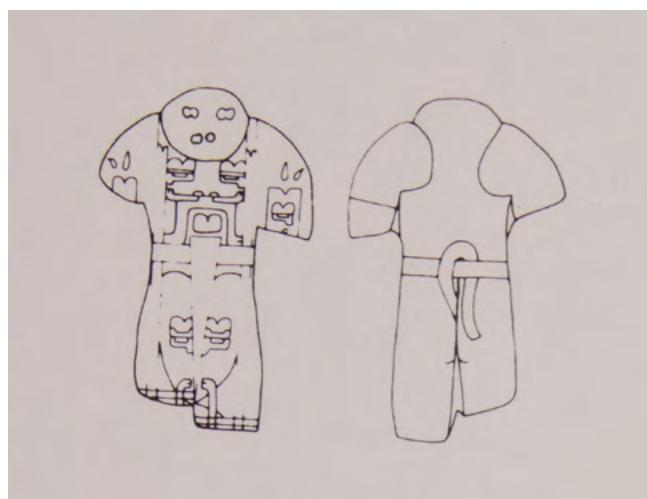
PUBLISHED

Peter David Joralemon, "The Olmec Dragon: A Study in Pre-Columbian Iconography," in Henry B. Nicholson, ed., *Origins of Religious Art and Iconography in Preclassic Mesoamerica*, Los Angeles, 1976, p. 42 (foldout), fig. 10 a1 (drawing)
Michael D. Coe, ed. *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*, Princeton, 1995, p. 152, cat. no. 23
Karl A. Taube, *Olmec Art at Dumbarton Oaks*, Washington, D.C., 2004, p. 76, fig. 34f (drawing)

EXHIBITED

The Art Museum, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*, December 16, 1995 - February 25, 1996; additional venue: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, April 14 - June 9, 1996

\$ 25,000-35,000



Drawing by Peter David Joralemon of the present object.



The prized blue-green color of the jade, delicately incised motifs, and the refined physiognomy of the figure led to its valued repurposing as an heirloom. It is a figure whereby the incised motifs brand it as a central axis of power connected to the potent supernaturals of the Olmec world.

The figure has a slender waist with broad shoulders that gently narrow and are flexed backward in a ceremonial posture. The curve of the legs indicates a relaxed bend to the once-present lower legs. The figure's broken limbs were smoothed and repolished and the left arm was drilled for attachment of a lower arm. In an effort to complete the figure, a minimal face was drilled into the neck.

Important Olmec iconography is expertly incised over the torso, legs, and upper arms, marking the figure as a conduit and carrier of power. The iconography is centered on the image of the Olmec Dragon and vegetative elements. The chest is incised with the frontal face of the

Supernatural that is framed within double bands running vertically the length of the body and legs. The waistband is carved to cover this framing device implying the motifs were on the body of the figure and the waistband thus covers the image. A large looped knot of the loincloth is incised on the back. The shoulders are each incised with sprouting cleft elements of maize and the upper legs appear to bisect a symmetrical frontal face.

For a figure of similar form, see Michael D. Coe, ed. *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*, Princeton, 1995, p. 149, cat. no. 19; for a similar incised jade heirloom figure see Sotheby's, New York, May 17, 2000, lot 92. See also Elizabeth P. Benson and Beatriz de la Fuente, eds., *Olmec Art of Ancient Mexico*, Washington, 1996, p. 207, cat. no. 46, for a recarved jade figure.



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**OLMEC STONE CROUCHING
TRANSFORMATION FIGURE,
MIDDLE PRECLASSIC,
CIRCA 900-600 BC**

Height: 4 3/8 in (11.1 cm)

PROVENANCE

Miguel Covarrubias (1904-1957)
George Pepper (1913-1969), acquired from the above
American Private Collection, acquired from the above in
July 1967

PUBLISHED

Michael D. Coe, ed. *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*.
Princeton, 1995, p. 173, cat. no. 45

EXHIBITED

The Art Museum, Princeton University, Princeton, New
Jersey, *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*, December 16,
1995 - February 25, 1996; additional venue: The Museum of
Fine Arts, Houston, April 14 - June 9, 1996
The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, *Ancient America*, long-
term loan, 2001-2011

\$ 7,000-10,000



The readied crouching position of the figure is a seamless combination of the human and animal traits in a transformation posture. The sloping back with narrowed waist, strong sculpted shoulders, and bent legs forward and back appear to be a human form, yet the thick feline tail extends over to the left thigh. The head has been minimally carved as if unfinished, with softly raised feline ears and a narrow mouth. The slight indentation at the back of the head implies the presence of a helmet as seen distinctly in other crouching transformation figures (see Michael D. Coe, ed. *The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership*. Princeton, 1995, p. 170, fig. 1, and p. 172, cat. no. 44).



21

PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**MAYA JADE PLAQUE OF A SEATED LORD,
LATE CLASSIC, CIRCA AD 550-950**

Height: 3 in (7.6 cm); Width: 3 in (7.6 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection

American Private Collection, acquired from the above in 1971

PUBLISHED

Gerald Berjonneau, Emile Deletaille and Jean-Louis Sonnery,
*Rediscovered Masterpieces of Mesoamerica: Mexico-Guatemala-
Honduras*, Boulogne, 1985, p. 248, cat. no. 392 (photograph inverted)

EXHIBITED

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, *Ancient America*, long-term loan,
2001-2011

\$ 8,000-12,000

This jade pendant plaque is masterfully carved in low relief with an elegant and highly detailed image of a lord, seated and gesturing in one of the most definitive images of a Maya elite. His strong and youthful body faces front in a cross-legged position and his head is turned in sharp profile to his right showing the regal extended nose bridge, tear-shaped eye, and relaxed mouth. One hand is planted firmly on his leg and his right hand is raised with delicate fingers flexed in a symbolic gesture, a posturing that is most famously depicted on the Nebaj jade plaque, indicative of a regal encounter or audience scene. The massive headdress features the mythic Principal Bird Deity with long plumes cascading to the back, his wrists are enveloped in thick bead bracelets and he is further adorned with a thin cord necklace suspending two discs.

The whole scene is enclosed in a graceful cartouche frame that represents the maw of the Otherworld, indicating we are looking into a portal to see the deceased continuing in rituals.

Audience scenes of lords are frequently depicted on painted Maya vessels. However, illustrating such an event on jade involved another dimension of materiality. Jade was considered the most valued and sacred material of enduring capability; it was a 'material with soul or spirit' (Stephen Houston, *The Life Within, Classic Maya and the Matter of Permanence*, New Haven, 2014, p. 93) Carving and polishing hard jade with the idealized portrait of a lord created an important and symbolic precious object.

The plaque is drilled laterally for suspension. The carver made use of the variegated veins of the jade to have the figure mainly in deep green.





David M. Solinger in the entry corridor of his apartment, New York, featuring a selection of works from The Collection



André Lansky, *Fruits confits*, The David M. Solinger Collection, Sotheby's Paris, December 2022; Adolph Gottlieb, *Figure* (Modern Day Auction); and sculptures from the present auction.

THE DAVID M. SOLINGER COLLECTION

LOTS 22-28

MODERNISM AND ANCIENT MESOAMERICA

The collection of David Solinger, who served as a trustee and then president of The Whitney Museum of American Art, reads as a primer on canonical modernism and abstraction and is full of aesthetic ideas that, at mid-century, were fresh and exciting. He fearlessly sought out the explosive and unusual, transcending the prejudgments of the uninitiated, and embraced the primordial, the expressive and the essential. It is therefore not surprising that Solinger, like the artists he championed, also sought those universal qualities in art forms created hundreds of years earlier, in cultures different from his own.

While the relationship between African art and early twentieth-century modernists is well known, the Solinger collection points to another fruitful dialogue, between

ancient Mesoamerican art and architecture and Western modernism. Concepts that developed in the great civilizations of Mesoamerica presaged the 'discoveries' of modernists in the early 20th century: from the geometric purity of Mezcala art (see lots 22 and 23), to the unrestrained graphic expressiveness of Nayarit terracotta sculpture (see lots 24 and 25).

David Solinger discovered Pre-Columbian art through some of the same American dealers from whom he acquired paintings: Pierre Matisse, André Emmerich, Sidney Janis, and Earl Stendahl. Solinger's collection of premodern art reveals a distinctively American curiosity about the universality of human forms and materiality that transcend cultural boundaries.



David M. Solinger at Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1981

Solinger was among the first American collectors to explore these connections, bringing Mesoamerican artworks into a dialogue of great artistic traditions.

Two magnificent stone figures that Solinger acquired from Emmerich in 1958 are among the finest known representatives of the abstract Mezcala style. First studied in the 1920s by the Mexican artist and collector Miguel Covarrubias, this mysterious tradition is believed to have emerged in the third century BCE, long predating the Aztecs and the Maya. Solinger was one of the earliest collectors of this now-famous style. Mezcala stone figures are a distillation of the human form – minimal yet expressive with an elegant simplicity of pure sculptural geometry. Large planes of perfectly smooth colored stone suggest permanence and materiality. The subtlest angles impart the naturalism of great sculpture. The tilt of the head of the figure offered here as lot 22 suggests the expressive personality of its subject, while firm diagonal lines define the arms against the torso, confident in placement and technique. In the Solinger home, his Mezcala figures were placed near two important works of modern art: Fernand Léger's *Jeune fille au corsage jaune* and Jean Arp's *Fruit méchant*. Léger's linear description reduces the young woman's face to an essential form, a solution that the Mezcala artist had also conceived. The solid materiality of Arp's patiently carved geometries is undeniably like the stoic ancient figures.

In the rounded, fleshy forms and exaggerated features of ancient West Mexican terracotta sculpture,

Solinger again found an aesthetic dialogue with modern art. Once deemed 'brutal' and 'absurd' by early Western viewers, Nayarit art brims with vitality and expressive power. The richly decorated couple of the Nayarit Ixtlán del Rio style represents the revered concept of ancestor worship and the primordial union of male and female creative forces. They are engaged in ceremonial activity as a pair: the male plays music on a turtle shell carapace with an antler, and the woman holds a bowl for communal feasting. Their kinship is reinforced through shared physiognomy, facial features, detailed body design and jewelry. Wavy concentric lines cover their faces, and zigzag serpent motifs mark their bodies.

The beautifully painted clothing and the stylized proportions of the Nayarit and Jalisco figures in the collection resonate with other twentieth-century abstract paintings displayed in Solinger's apartment, such as Joan Miró's *Femme, étoiles* and Jean Dubuffet's *Chamelier*. Wild tendrils, liberal brushstrokes, and bold expressions entrance the viewer, as do Dubuffet and Miró's surreal visual worlds.

More than simple "affinities", these works share across cultures a profound appreciation for the basic architecture of the human form, as well as an intense expressiveness charged by their unrestrained delight in color and form.



Jean Arp, *Fruit méchant*; Fernand Léger, *Jeune fille au corsage jaune*
(The David M. Solinger Collection Auction); Mezcala Standing Figure
(lot 22 in the present auction)



22

LARGE MEZCALA FIGURE, TYPE M-10,
LATE PRECLASSIC, CIRCA 300-100 BC

Height 14 in (35.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

André Emmerich, New York (inv. no. G354)
Acquired from the above on May 9, 1958

\$ 40,000-60,000



Mezcala stone figures distill the human form into its simplest formal elements, with an elegant, expressive simplicity that is universally recognizable. The subtlest angles impart the naturalism of great sculpture. The tilt of the head on this figure suggests the emergence of an expression; firm diagonal lines of the arms against the torso, confident in placement and technique. A broad rectangular torso centers the body between the tapered legs and the narrowed brow of the head.

In the Solinger home, this Mezcala figure was placed nearby two important works: Fernand Léger's 1951 *Jeune fille au corsage jaune* and Jean Arp's 1936 *Fruit méchant*. These works share a purity of form and color, as well as profound expressiveness.

This Mezcala figure is a particularly large example of the M10 style, described as the cardinal image of the Mezcala tradition which influenced subsequent types (see Carlo Gay and Frances Pratt, *Mezcala, Ancient Stone Sculpture from Guerrero Mexico*, Geneva, 1992, p. 51).



Mezcala figures were first studied in the 1920s by the Mexican artist and collector Miguel Covarrubias, who applied both an artistic appreciation and scholarly approach in looking at regional styles. It was not until the dedicated research of Carlo T.E. Gay in the 1960s that Mezcala styles were thoroughly described, analyzed and illustrated in a systematic format. These efforts were recorded in the exhibition at the Museum of Primitive Art in New York, *Mezcala Stone Sculpture, The Human Figure*, 1967. Concurrently, significant attention was drawn to the art style by exhibitions in the New York art scene, notably by Andre Emmerich. His keen eye recognized the modernist aesthetic in the exhibition *Abstract Art Before Columbus*, 1957. Solinger was one of the early collectors of Mezcala art, and acquired the present figure from Emmerich, along with the figure offered here as lot 23.



23

MEZCALA STANDING FIGURE, TYPE M-10,
LATE PRECLASSIC, CIRCA 300-100 BC

Height 9 1/2 in. (24.1 cm)

PROVENANCE

André Emmerich, New York (inv. no. G327)
Acquired from the above on May 9, 1958

PUBLISHED

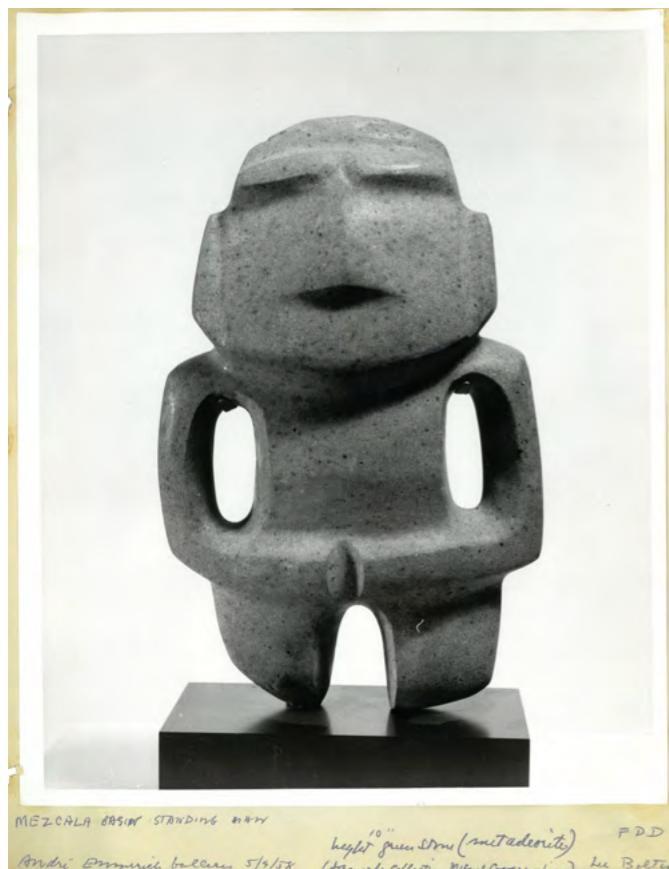
Carlo Gay and Frances Pratt, *Mezcala: Ancient Stone Sculpture from Guerrero, Mexico*, Geneva, 1992, p. 67, pl. 53

\$ 20,000-30,000



Robust geometric physiognomy gives the present figure a dominating presence. Contrasting vertical and horizontal planes create a grid-like openwork of solids and voids. Figures of the M-14 style are distinguished by the openwork arms and account for only a small number of figures in the extant corpus. Gay notes the style 'represents a dramatic conceptual and technical advancement in the ongoing attempt to achieve a viable human image in stone.' (Carlo Gay and Frances Pratt, *Mezcala, Ancient Stone Sculpture from Guerrero, Mexico*, Geneva, 1992, p. 67).

The massive head has prominent brows that cast shadow on the recessed eye area, which sweeps down to the broad facial plane, which is defined by the ridge of the nose. The torso is subtly indicated by the ridge of the ribcage, and oval openings of the arms create the architectural form of the columns seen in Mezcala stone temple models. The figure is carved in fine-grained speckled gray-green andesite.



24

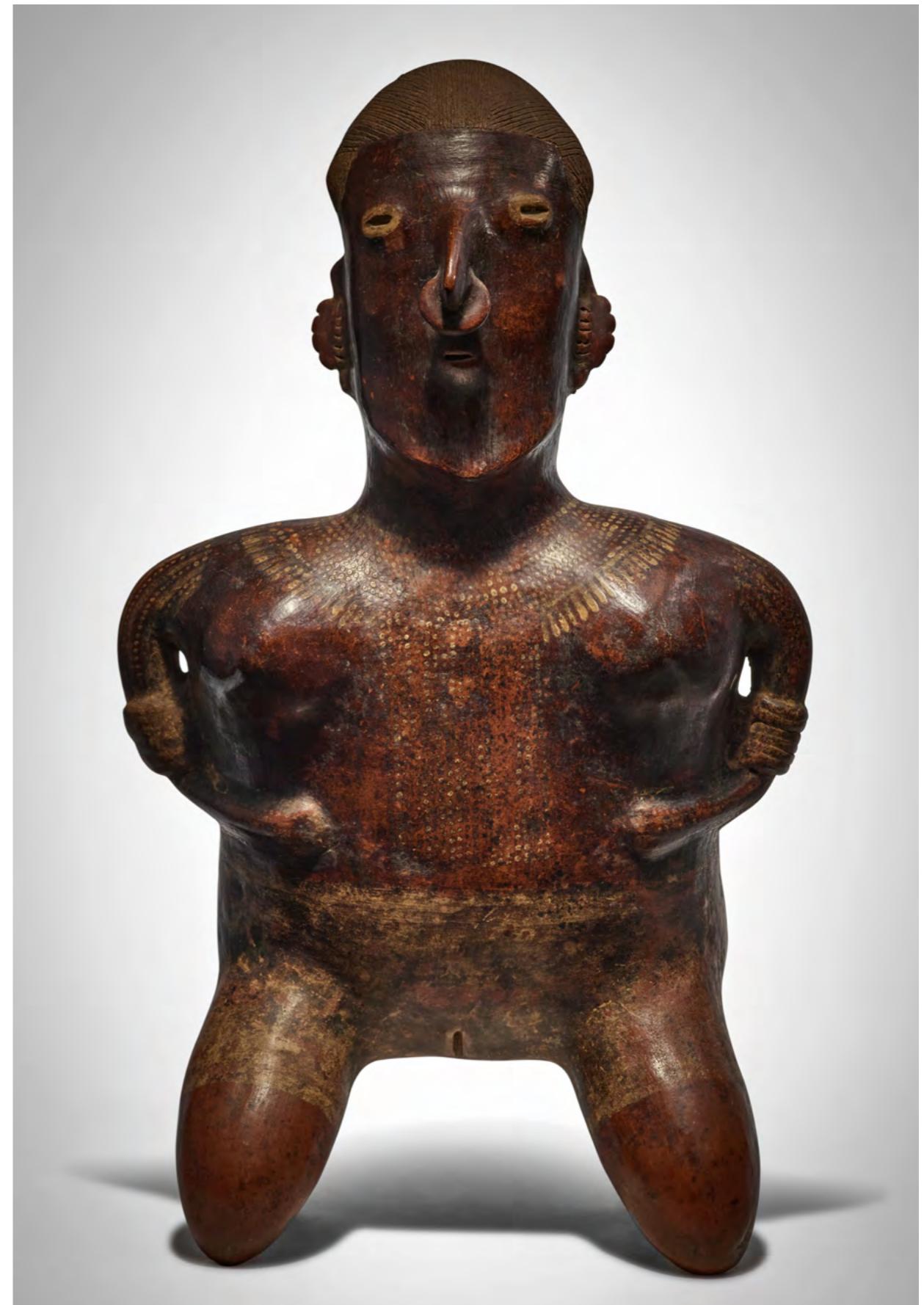
NAYARIT KNEELING FEMALE FIGURE,
SAN SEBASTIÁN RED STYLE, PROTOCLASSIC,
CIRCA 100 BC - AD 250

Height: 17 3/4 in (45.1 cm)

PROVENANCE

Stendahl Gallery, Los Angeles
Acquired from the above in 1952

\$ 5,000-7,000



This elegant, restrained female figure is covered in fine painted jewelry ornamenting her naked body and painted in a deep red with a lustrous burnish. The highly ornamented body, kneeling posture on the stylized elongated feet and trance-like face may indicate a female's rite of passage; such events are believed to be the subjects of certain West Mexican terracotta figures.

She leans forward slightly, her long oval face and smooth cheeks marked by a sharp chin line, a tiny slit mouth and her slender nose incorporating a disc nose-ring. The finely striated coiffure is neatly divided into sections. The serrated edge of the ears indicates multiple ornaments. The broad torso is finely painted with a collar of nine rows of tiny beads and another row of slender pendants. This cascade of fine beadwork continues down the center of her body, down her arms and continues down her back. The arms have multiple armbands and are just slightly held away from the torso as her hands press into her ribs.

For a kneeling figure of similar style, see Robert B. Pickering, Cheryl Smallwood-Roberts, *West Mexico, Ritual and Identity*, 2016, p. 14 C, cat. no. 16, for a figure in the Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa (GM54.4051).



25

NAYARIT SEATED COUPLE, IXTLÁN
DEL RÍO STYLE, PROTOCLASSIC,
CIRCA 100 BC - AD 250

Heights: 13 in and 14 3/8 in (33 cm and 34 cm)

PROVENANCE

Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
Acquired from the above in 1955

\$ 5,000-7,000



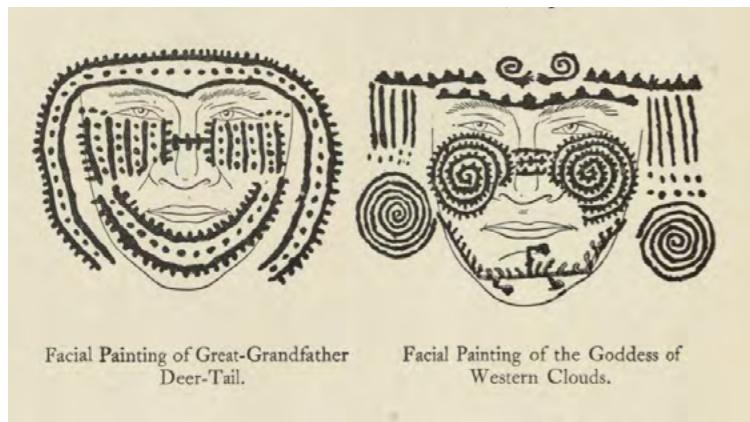
This richly decorated couple from the Solinger collection is a lively and vibrant example of Nayarit sculpture. The seated and standing couples bring to life the revered concept of ancestor worship and the primordial union of male and female creative forces. Couples engaged in a ceremonial activity, as in this pair, celebrate the continuity of a community ritual: here the male plays a turtle shell carapace with an antler, and the woman holds a bowl for communal feasting. The importance of both male and female participation in ritual events was an indication of their status, and their actions emphasized the separate but interdependent spheres of men and women. Community ceremonies and seasonal festivals took place in the public ceremonial spaces known as *guachimonton*, a compound of circular clusters of houses around a central tiered mound. The *guachimonton* provided a dedicated space for performative events.

Shared physiognomy, facial features, detailed body design, and jewelry reinforce kinship ties and support the interpretation of these figures as founding ancestors. Large heads and wide alert eyes are dominant in the Solinger couple, above stout torsos and short arms and legs. Bold facial painting of concentric wavy lines covers the faces with specific motifs

around the mouths. Their bodies are marked by zigzag serpent motifs, on the female curving down each side of her chest, and from shoulder to shoulder on the male. His turtle carapace fits over his left hand and his prominent beaded armbands are likely small shell bells to enhance his musical prowess. They each have crescent pendants on the chest, earrings with applied crescent shells, and wear headbands likely of animal pelts. The female's skirt completely covers her lower body, with designs on the front of opposed triangular motifs and switching to dotted circular medallions on the underside, perhaps representing the cross-section of a plant.

Similar facial designs were recorded by the early 19th century explorer Carl Lumholtz in his travels among the Huichol Indians of the Sierra Madre. The tattooed patterns were created for certain pilgrimages and described as masks of the gods with some designs representing clouds, serpents, or rain.

For a couple showing similar facial designs, see Mireille Holsbeke and Karel Arnaut, *Offerings for a New Life: Funerary Images from Pre-Columbian West Mexico*, Antwerp, 1998, p. 157, cat. no. 84; for a very similar couple, see Sotheby's, New York, November 17, 2006, lot 388.



Facial Painting of Great-Grandfather
Deer-Tail.

Facial Painting of the Goddess of
Western Clouds.

Drawing of Huichol Indian facial designs, illustrated in Carl Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, Vol. II, 1902, p. 142



26

JALISCO FIGURE WITH CHILD,
CHAPALA STYLE
LATE PRECLASSIC, CIRCA 300 - 100 BC

Heights: 11 3/4 in and 4 1/2 in (29.8 cm and 11.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
Acquired from the above in 1954

\$1,500-2,500



Jean Dubuffet, *Chamelier*, 1948. © 2022 Fondation Jean Dubuffet / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

The dramatically stylized heart-shaped head of this sculpture tapers into a thin leaf-like section, giving a graceful sculptural movement to the seated mother with her infant. The tiny facial features deeply recessed within the broad sweep of the face imbue her with a trance-like calmness. The prominent multiple earrings are also featured on the small separately-modeled infant resting within her rounded and folded legs.

The abstract stylization of this figure bears a charming similarity to a 1948 painting by Jean Dubuffet entitled *Chamelier*, which David Solinger acquired in 1954 from Pierre Matisse Gallery, the same year as he purchased the present sculpture from Sidney Janis Gallery in New York.



27

GUERRERO OBSIDIAN FIGURE
LATE PRECLASSIC, CIRCA 300 - 100 BC

Height: 6 3/4 in (17 cm)

PROVENANCE

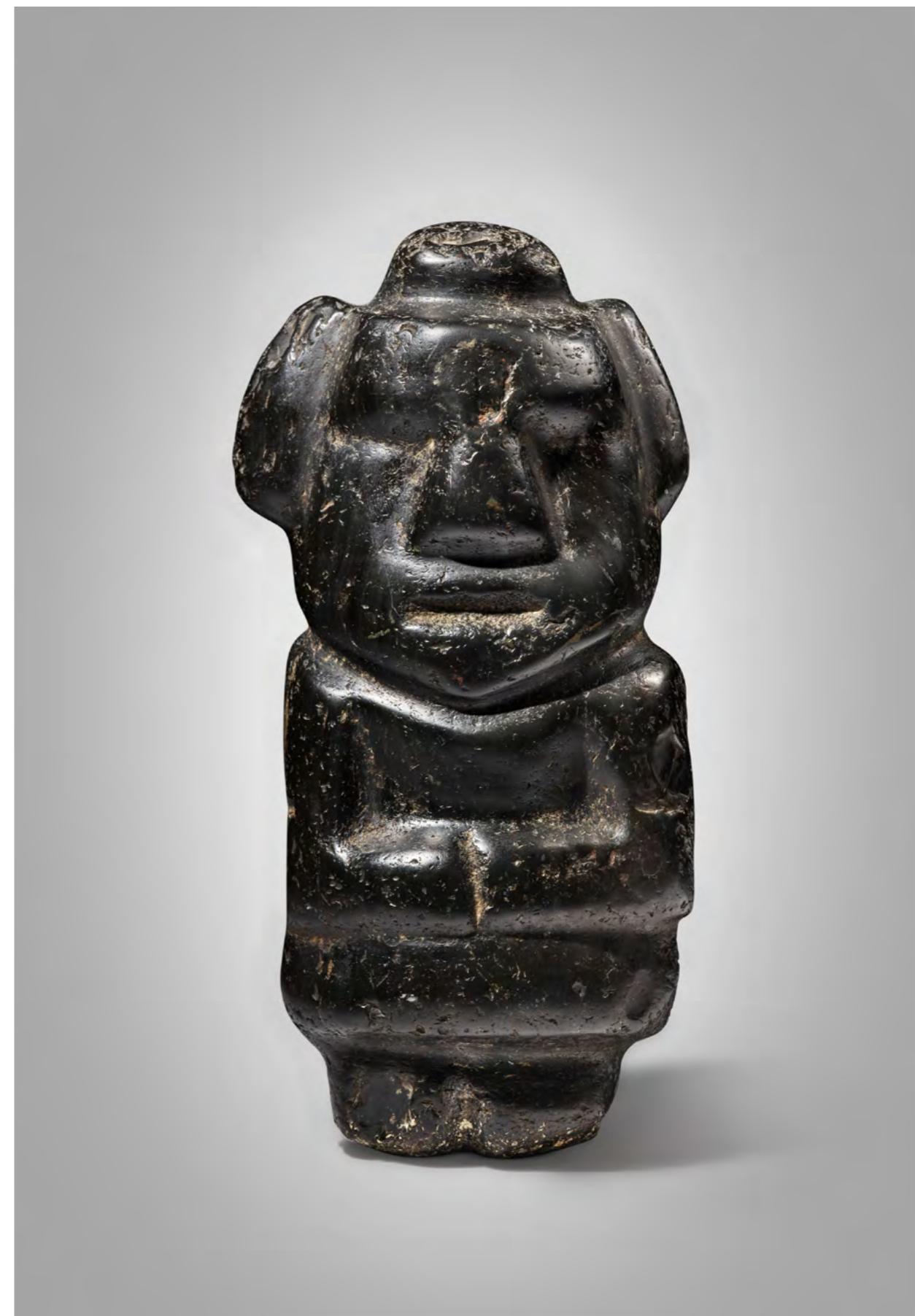
Kende Galleries at Gimbel Brothers, New York
Acquired from the above on April 26, 1951

\$1,500-2,500



A sculpture of a human figure was a rare and unusual use for the large block of obsidian from which this imposing work was carved, as such material would more often have been used for utilitarian tools or weaponry. While seemingly rudimentary, it contains important elements of the Preclassic style. The large head is carved to show the senses represented by ears, eyes and mouth. The arms are tightly bent onto the torso body in a formal posture, and the chest is rounded to show muscular contours. Short legs are gently separated by a groove, and the figure wears a knopped headdress. The reverse has been left in the natural shape of the cobble.

For other Guerrero stone figures of minimal carving, see Carlo Gay and Frances Pratt, *Mezcala: Ancient Stone Sculpture from Guerrero Mexico*, Geneva, 1992, p. 215, pls. 255-262.



28

COLIMA PRECLASSIC FIGURAL GROUP,
TUXCACUESCO-ORTICES STYLE,
LATE PRECLASSIC, CIRCA 300 - 100 BC

Heights: 7½in and 5 in. (19 cm and 12.7 cm)

PROVENANCE

Stendahl Gallery, Los Angeles
Acquired from the above in 1952

\$ 1,000-1,500

This sculptural group is comprised of solid figures including a female standing proudly with an infant in her arms, dressed in a skirt, headdress and with raised tattoos on her shoulders, and a slender seated figure in repose adorned with a medallion studded headband.



29

PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

XOCHIPALA STANDING FIGURE
EARLY PRECLASSIC,
CIRCA 1200-900 BC

Height: 9 3/4 in (24.8 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection
American Private Collection, acquired from the above in July
1976

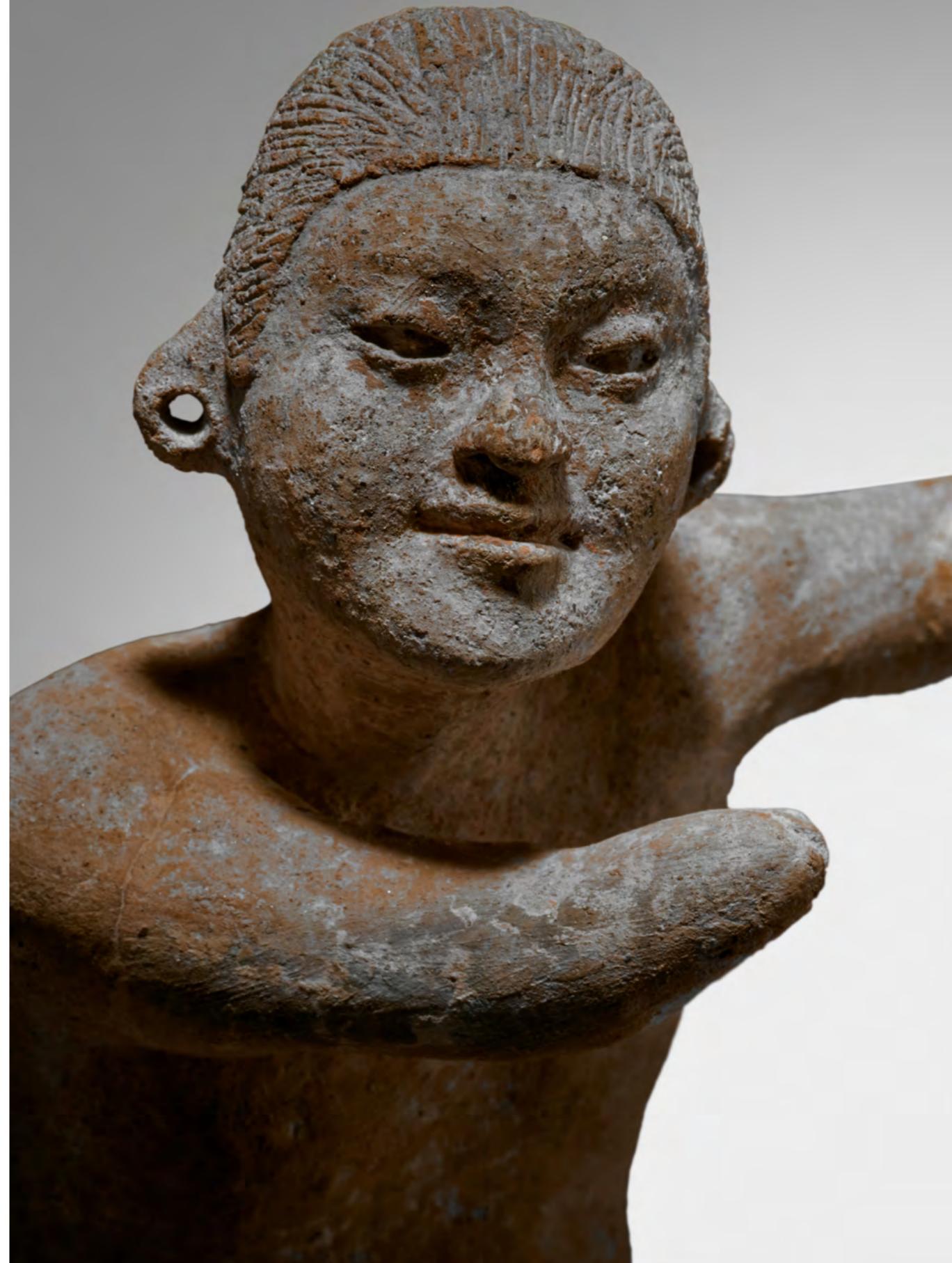
PUBLISHED

Jean M. Borgatti and Richard Brilliant, *Likeness and Beyond: Portraits from Africa and the World*, New York, 1990, p. 141, cat. no. 82
Gerald Berjonneau, Emile Deletaille and Jean-Louis Sonnery, *Rediscovered Masterpieces of Mesoamerica: Mexico-Guatemala-Honduras*, Boulogne, 1985, p. 199, cat. no. 307

EXHIBITED

The Center for African Art, New York, *Likeness and Beyond: Portraits from Africa and the World*, February 14 - August 12, 1990; additional venue: The Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, September 16 - November 11, 1990
The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, *Ancient America*, long-term loan, 2001-2011

\$ 8,000-12,000



Xochipala solid figures are known for their highly expressive faces and postures made with an acute naturalism. As Gilette Griffin noted, “ [...] these splendid portrait figures contain an inner life quite apart from that found in other Mexican ceramic traditions.” (Gilette G. Griffin, in Carlo T. E. Gay, ed., *Xochipala: The Beginnings of Olmec Art*, Princeton, 1972, p. 8).

With fleshy full legs firmly conveying his weight, this figure is in a performative stance. His head is cocked

upward, and his body is twisted slightly opposite. The raised right arm shows his missing hand which is a deliberate illustration of his defect which likely implies a connection to the supernatural. The upraised left hand probably held an implement as part of his performance. As typically shown on Xochipala figures, the striated coiffure is of roughened texture.

For similar figures in rhythmic postures, see Carlo T. E. Gay, ed., *ibid.*, fig. 10 and fig. 19.



PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

XOCHIPALA SEATED FIGURE
EARLY PRECLASSIC,
CIRCA 1200-900 BC

Height: 3 in (7.6 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection
American Private Collection, acquired from the above in July
1976

PUBLISHED

Gerald Berjonneau, Emile Deletaille and Jean-Louis Sonnery,
Rediscovered Masterpieces of Mesoamerica: Mexico-
Guatemala-Honduras, Boulogne, 1985, p. 198, cat. no. 304

EXHIBITED

The Walters Museum of Art, Baltimore, *Ancient America*,
long-term loan, 2001-2011

\$ 3,000-5,000

This seemingly introverted seated figure with a distinctively shaped head and pointed ears captures our attention as is characteristic of the best of the Xochipala style.

Xochipala art from the Guerrero region includes finely incised stone vessels and solid ceramic figurines of delicate and dynamic postures. While it has been an enigmatic style to fully classify in the study of Early Preclassic art, it is generally accepted that the Xochipala style represents a highly centralized local style within the Guerrero region that influenced subsequent ceramic styles.



31

PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK

CHONTAL STONE MASK
LATE PRECLASSIC,
CIRCA 300-100 BC

Height: 6 3/4 in (17.2 cm)

PROVENANCE

European Private Collection, acquired by 1969
American Trade, acquired from the above
Sotheby's, New York, May 16, 2008, lot 12, consigned by the
above
Private Collection, New York, acquired at the above auction

\$ 10,000-15,000

Though perhaps less well-known than the sharply geometric style of its neighboring culture, the Mezcala, Chontal art merits attention and distinction from the former. Chontal stone sculpture is largely figurative. Modeled face-panels and masks notably boast abstracted representations of human faces that are occasionally - and strikingly - softened by a perceived naturalism found within deep, rounded grooves, adding depth and occasional suppleness to bones and brows. This particular mask straddles this threshold between stone stiffness and gentle, worldly likeness. Sprouting from the figure's prominent nose, his brow arches and casts a shadow over his open-work oval eyes. The figure's mouth is similarly stylized, carved simply and deeply. The cheeks,

which subtly rise from the hard, mottled green and white porphyry suggest a surprising fleshiness - imbuing the elongated face with touches of familiar physicality.

As figurative objects, masks are believed to have held an important role in Chontal culture and spirituality, especially in relation to funerary rites. As Carlo Gay writes, "[Chontal masks] suggest a relationship between death and ritual, in which death is a transition from one state to another, a return to the world of the ancestors through a passage or voyage requiring appropriate symbolism to represent its liminal condition" (Carlo Gay and Robin Gay, *Chontal: Ancient Stone Sculpture from Guerrero, Mexico*, Geneva, 2001, p. 71).



PROPERTY FROM THE DONALD AND LUCY BELDOCK COLLECTION

**ZACATECAS SEATED FIGURES
PROTOCLASSIC,
CIRCA 100 BC-AD 250**

Heights: 16 1/8 in (41 cm) and 14 in (35.6 cm)

PROVENANCE

Edward and Joyce Strauss, Colorado, acquired prior to 1971
André Emmerich, New York (inv. no. XWC 17 a, b), acquired
from the above
Donald and Lucy Beldock, New York, acquired from the above
in June 1972

EXHIBITED

Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago, *Pre-Columbian Art*, March 14 -
April 22, 1972

\$ 6,000-8,000

The enigmatic and lively style of Zacatecas is portrayed in this male and female duo, each showing the characteristic pierced facial features, thin looped arms and resist body decoration. The male figure has a unique hair coiffure believed to be hair wrapped around upright supports creating the appearance of mushroom stalks.

For similar examples, see Mireille Holsbeke and Karel Arnaut, eds., *Offerings for a New Life: Funerary Images from Pre-Columbian West Mexico*, 1998, p. 163, fig. 88.





33

PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF RICHARD L.
WEISMAN

**VERACRUZ STANDING FIGURE
LATE CLASSIC, AD 550-950**

Length: 9 3/8 in (23.8 cm)

PROVENANCE

Marcia S. Weisman, California, active as a collector
from the 1950s-1970s
Thence by descent

\$ 6,000-8,000

Boasting their signature, strained smiles, the Veracruz "sonriente" figures seem to be performing in lively song and dance, deftly defying their terracotta stillness. Mirthful and musical, the true function of the sunny *sonrientes* continues to elude scholars of the ancient Mesoamerican region. While some have drawn associations between the figures and *Xochipilli*, the Aztec god of dance, music, and joy, others suggest that they "represent sacrificial victims [whose smiles are a] result of drug-induced euphoria intended to dispel the bad omen of sadness" (Doris Heyden, quoted in Marilyn M. Goldstein, *Ceremonial Sculpture of Ancient Veracruz*, Greenvale, New York, 1987, p. 63).

Wearing only a constricting chest band, this figure is also adorned with a beaded necklace, gourd anklets, and pointed earrings. He holds a rattle in his left hand.





AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

Dr. Austin Newton was a distinguished scientist and a respected professor who spent his entire career at Princeton University. Although well-known in his own field of Molecular Biology, he was discreet and unassuming in his passion for African Art, and was familiar only to a small circle of friends and advisors in the art world. He applied a scholar's rigor to his collecting and began from a young age, making his first acquisitions in 1967, shortly after the legendary 1966 auction of the collection of Helena Rubinstein, which had signaled the start of a new era in American collecting. Newton formed the core of his collection in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and then occasionally added to it over the next fifty years.

Born in Richmond, Texas, Austin Newton graduated with a degree in Chemistry from the University of Texas at Austin in 1959, and earned his PhD in Biochemistry from the University of California Berkeley in 1964. With a fellowship from the National Science Foundation, Newton then joined a team of researchers at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, led by the Nobel Prize winning French biochemist Jacques Monod. The city of Paris would have a profound influence on Newton, and it was there that he first discovered African Art. During his fellowship, and

on his later periodic trips to Paris, he visited the leading dealers of the day, including Charles Ratton and Rene Rasmussen, and bought from Ratton a number of Malian works including his exceptional Tellem figure (offered here as lot 40). In Paris he also met Hélène Leloup (then Hélène Kamer), who would later visit the collection and with whom he kept up a warm correspondence over many years. Newton was given an assistant professorship at Princeton in 1966, and was a founding member of the Department of Molecular Biology. He would spend the rest of his career at Princeton. Back in the United States, Newton and his longtime scientific collaborator and wife Noriko Ohta visited the dealer John J. Klejman, and acquired several pieces from him in the early 1970s. Newton assembled an enviable African Art library (offered here as lot 54) and kept up with the auction market, buying occasionally at Christie's and Sotheby's. Later in his life, Newton generously loaned works to museum exhibitions, including to the exhibition *Surfaces Seen and Unseen* at the Princeton University Art Museum, in 2016 and to the recent major exhibition *Sahel: Art and Empires on the Shores of the Sahara* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 2020.

34

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

BAMANA HEADDRESS, MALI

Length: 9 3/8 in (23.8 cm)

PROVENANCE

Charles Ratton, Paris

Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired from the above

\$ 2,000-3,000





35

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**BAMANA ZOOMORPHIC
HEADDRESS, MALI**

Length: 25 1/2 in (64.8 cm)

PROVENANCE

John J. Klejman, New York

Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired from the
above

\$ 6,000-9,000

36

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF
DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**BAMANA ZOOMORPHIC
MASK, MALI**

Height: 15 3/8 in (39 cm)

PROVENANCE

Leo D. Arons, Princeton, New Jersey
Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired
from the above

\$ 2,000-3,000



37

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF
DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**BAMANA ZOOMORPHIC
MASK, MALI**

Height: 6 5/8 in (16.8 cm)

The reverse with a [Klejman] label,
inscribed in black ink: "BAMBARA - REP.
OF MALI 19 CENT. US"

PROVENANCE

John J. Klejman, New York
Mozes S. Schupf, New York, acquired from
the above
Sotheby's, New York, November 21, 1996,
lot 31, consigned by the Mozes S. Schupf
Foundation
Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey,
acquired at the above auction

PUBLISHED

Jean-Baptiste Bacquart, *The Tribal Arts of
Africa*, London, 1998, p. 64, cat. no. 3

\$ 3,000-5,000



AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

BAMANA ZOOMORPHIC MASK FOR THE KORÈ ASSOCIATION, MALI

Height: 17 1/8 in (43.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Hubert Goldet, Paris

François de Ricqlès, Paris, *Arts primitifs. Collection Hubert Goldet*, June 30 - July 1, 2001, lot 117

Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired at the above auction

\$ 15,000-25,000

The artist that created this powerful mask intended to evoke fear and submission in the viewer – as was the ritual purpose of *surukuw*, or hyena masks, which were worn in *kore*, a Bamana male initiation ceremony. The present mask is of impressive volume, with a large mouth gaping open in menacing laughter. *Surukuw* masks are distinguished by the pronounced protrusion of the rounded forehead and cranial ridge on the top of the head, and oblong geometric face, with gaping circular or rectangular eyes; for a classic example, see Jean-Paul Colleyn, *Bamana: The Art of Existence in Mali*, New York, 2001, p. 119, cat. no. 104.

Kore functions as an initiation ceremony, but it also "is included among the rites that influence the natural cycle, for *kore* masters boast of being able to appeal directly to the heavens, the divine supplication par excellence, in order to make it rain. Formerly, when rain was abundant, they were able conversely to end storms that were threatening to overwhelm farmers in their fields" (Jean-Paul Colleyn, *Visions of Africa: Bamana*, 2008, p. 28).



39

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**BAMANA ZOOMORPHIC HEADDRESS
FOR THE KÒMÒ POWER ASSOCIATION,
MALI**

Height: 46 7/8 in (119 cm)

PROVENANCE

Pierre Loeb, Paris

Raymond and Laura Wielgus, Chicago, acquired from the above

Allan Frumkin, Chicago, acquired from the above

Sotheby Parke-Bernet, *African, Oceanic, American Indian and Pre-Columbian Art from the Collection of Allan Frumkin*, January 27, 1968, lot 11

Merton D. Simpson, New York, acquired at the above auction

Simone de Monbrison, Paris

Private Collection, acquired from the above

Christie's, Paris, December 4, 2009, lot 1, consigned by the above

Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired at the above auction

\$ 15,000-25,000



40

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**TELLEM FIGURE, MALI,
CIRCA 11TH – 15TH CENTURY**

Height: 19 3/4 in (50.2 cm)

PROVENANCE

Charles Ratton, Paris
Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired from the
above in the Fall of 1967

PUBLISHED

Princeton University Art Museum, ed., *Surfaces Seen and Unseen* [exhibition checklist], Princeton, 2016, p. 7
Alisa LaGamma, ed., *Sahel: Art and Empires on the Shores of the Sahara*, New York, 2020, p. 175, cat. no. 92, and p. 282,
cat. no. 92

EXHIBITED

Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, New Jersey,
Surfaces Seen and Unseen, July 2 – October 9, 2016
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, *Sahel: Art and Empires on the Shores of the Sahara*, January 30 – March 12,
2020, and August 29 – October 26, 2020

\$ 40,000-60,000



This exceptionally fine Tellem figure was acquired from the legendary French art dealer Charles Ratton in 1967 by Dr. Austin Newton, while he was conducting research in molecular biology with Nobel Laureate Jacques Monod at the Pasteur Institute in Paris. It has remained in the Newton collection since then, and has most recently been exhibited in the landmark 2020 exhibition *Sahel: Art and Empires on the Shores of the Sahara* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and published in the catalogue of that exhibition.

The Bandiagara Escarpment is a majestic run of sandstone cliffs that slices across present-day central Mali between the Niger River and the Burkina Faso border. Rising over 1,500 feet in sections, the Bandiagara is one of the most dramatic land formations of sub-Saharan Africa and provides a natural protective barrier against foreign incursions and natural shelters for wood sculptures produced by successive interrelated cultures. The Dogon people arrived in the region circa the 15th century and since then, have thrived by constructing their villages on the steep cliff face along the escarpment.

Dogon oral traditions relate the story of their arrival to the Bandiagara after an exodus from their original homeland in Mande at the heart of the Mali empire. They referred to the inhabitants they encountered as *tellem*, or "we found them", and this term has come to describe the pre-Dogon culture and sculptural style of the region. Some Tellem are thought to have fled upon the arrival of the outsiders, while some were integrated into the Dogon population. According to Alisa Lagamma: "Later Dogon residents of the Bandiagara removed the creations of their Tellem precursors from the necropolises, for example, and harnessed the potency of these works by positioning them on their own altars and integrating them into their own spiritual practices." (Alisa LaGamma, ed., *Sahel: Art and Empires on the Shores of the Sahara*, New York, 2020, p. 169).

Scholars have suggested that a period of cultural overlap between the Tellem and the Dogon followed the arrival of the latter to the Bandiagara, and the sculptural

styles of each are undoubtedly interrelated, making it sometimes difficult to discern one from the other. The group of sculptures traditionally attributed to the Tellem share certain attributes including a tall, narrow overall form, with short bent legs, columnar torso, and large columnar head. The figure is frequently depicted with both arms raised straight above and formed continuously with the sides of the head, often with the hands meeting at the apex of the sculpture. These figures are frequently entirely encased in applied organic material, which forms a hardened crusty craquelure, concealing the detail of the sculpture's surface but enhancing the appearance of age and ritual power.

The Newton Tellem figure is particularly distinguished by its subtle contrapposto; the hermaphroditic figure stands in a slightly asymmetrical pose suggesting movement and lively, energetic potential. Beneath the thickly-encrusted sacrificial surface, we can still discern eyes, nose, mouth and a plank-shaped beard jutting from the chin; beneath is a rhythmically stacked arrangement of breasts, belly, umbilicus, and pubis. Little is known of the specific iconography in Tellem artwork, but the sculptor of the present figure has quite deliberately included both male and female characteristics related to procreation, fecundity, and continuity of a family lineage. The gesture of raised arms is an archetype of art from the Bandiagara region. As Hélène Leloup has noted: "The statues with raised arms form part of a group of statuettes of different styles found all along the cliffs: Djennenke, classical Tellem, Niongorn, Kormakan, to which we can add the ones mentioned by Leiris, the 'raised arm' statuettes in the caves of Yougo [...]. These figures played a role in rainmaking rites performed by all the different inhabitants of the cliffs: a cultural adaptation by osmosis responding to the chronic lack of rain along the dry cliffs" (Hélène Leloup, *Dogon*, Paris, 2009, p. 127).



41

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

DOGON FIGURE FRAGMENT, MALI

Height: 20 3/8 in (51.8 cm)

PROVENANCE

Charles Ratton, Paris

Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired from the above by
the early 1970s

\$ 3,000-5,000





42

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**WURKUN FIGURE, MURI MOUNTAINS,
UPPER BENUE RIVER, NIGERIA**

Height: 17 1/8 in (43.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

John J. Klejman, New York
Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired from the above

\$ 2,000-3,000

43

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**BOKI HEADDRESS,
CROSS RIVER REGION, NIGERIA**

Height: 8 7/8 in (22.5 cm)

The interior with a round label printed "B.M.S.
COLLECTION", and inscribed in black ink "L. 16."; one side
of the neck inscribed in white ink "6005"

PROVENANCE

Baptist Missionary Society (inv. no. L. 16.)
Charles Ratton, Paris
Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired from the
above by the early 1970s

\$ 4,000-6,000



44

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**MAMBILA DOUBLE FACE HELMET
MASK, NIGERIA**

Length: 15 in (38 cm)

PROVENANCE

John J. Klejman, New York

Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired from the above in
the early 1970s

\$ 4,000-6,000





45

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

MUMUYE FIGURE, NIGERIA

Height: 39 1/4 in (99.7 cm)

PROVENANCE

Hélène Kamer, Paris
Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired from the above
in the early 1970s

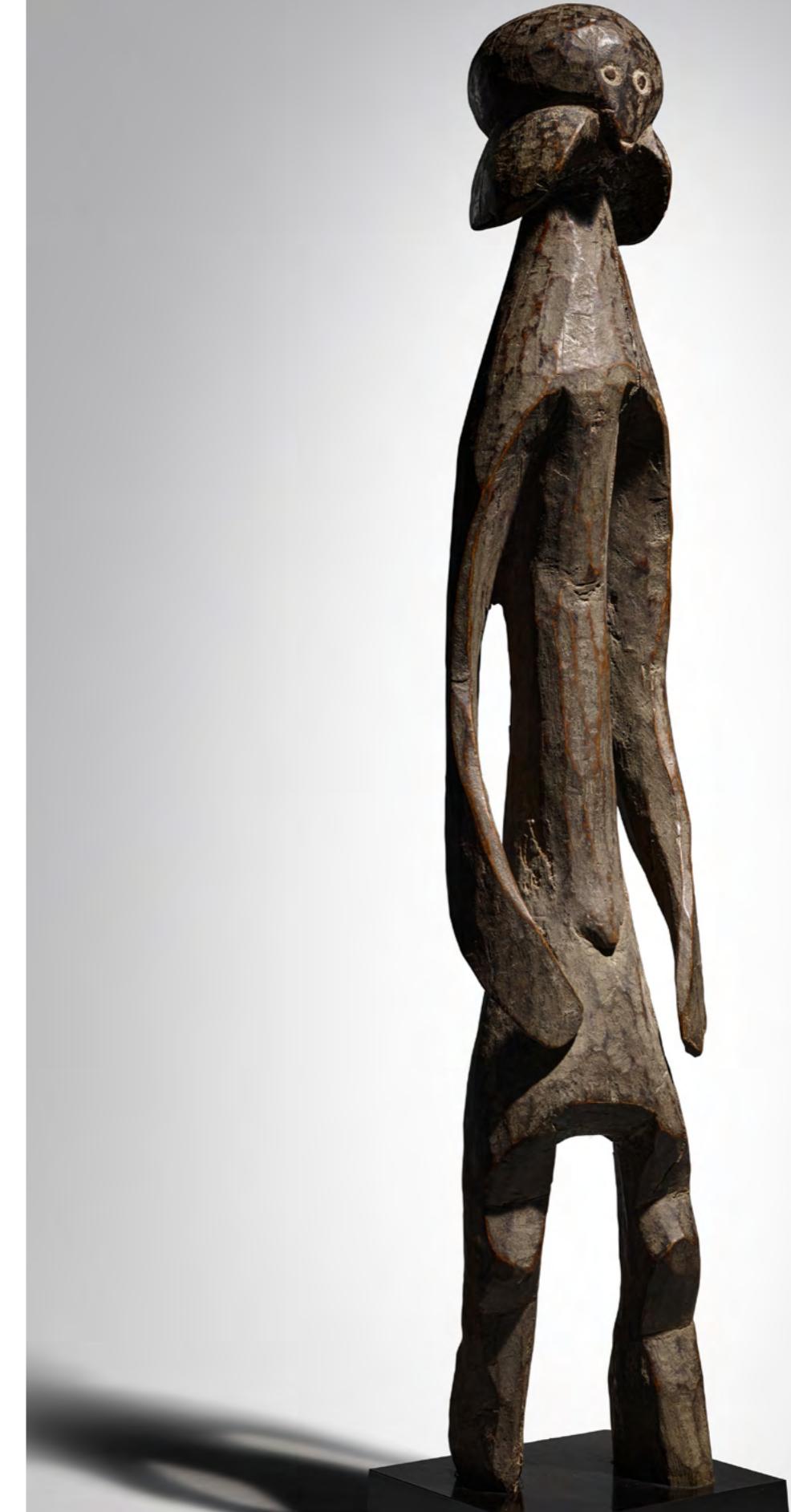
\$ 20,000-30,000

The art of the Mumuye people is one of the most celebrated and innovative sculptural traditions from Africa. Their distinctive and ingenious mode of representing the human form as a set of geometric volumes captured the wider attention of the outside world at a relatively late date. It was not until the 1960s that Philippe Guimiot discovered the extraordinary statuary of the Mumuye people, and Philippe Guimiot and Jacques Kerchache were the first to reveal this major form of African art to an audience of Western connoisseurs. The present figure entered the current collection in 1969, when it was acquired directly from Jacques Kerchache.

One of the only Western art historians to witness these statues being used in their original context was Arnold Rubin, who noted: "The high degree of stylistic diversity is paralleled by the variety of functions of Mumuye figures: some were used as oracles, others in connection with healing, and still others reinforced the status of important elders as embodiments of vaguely conceived tutelary spirits. Sometimes, one figure was employed in two or more of these capacities. A particular function cannot be correlated with size, style, or other formal attributes." (Arnold Rubin in Susan M. Vogel, ed., *For Spirits and Kings: African Art from the Paul and Ruth Tishman Collection*, New York, 1981, p. 155).

The dynamism of the figure's volumes are strikingly reminiscent of the vocabulary of Cubism, and the plastic study of movement undertaken by modern artists in general. As Christine Stelzig observed: "In view of their subtle configuration and overall design Mumuye sculptures remind the viewer not only of Brancusi, but also of Giacometti - or, to put it more correctly: many of Brancusi's and Giacometti's works are reminiscent of the magnificent works of these African sculptors." (Christine Stelzig, "Masterpieces of Sculpted Form: Mumuye Figures", in Oliver Wick and Antje Denner, eds., *Visual Encounters: Africa, Oceania, and Modern Art*, Basel, 2009, folio VIII, n.p.).

Prior to Guimiot's discovery of Mumuye statuary *in situ* in the late 1960s, the only accessible example of this tradition in Western museums was a figure that entered the British Museum in 1922 (inv. no. Af1922,0610.2; illustrated in William Rubin, ed., "Primitivism" in 20th Century Art: *Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, New York, 1984, Vol. 2, p. 597). There it did not fail to capture the attention of the young British sculptor Henry Moore, who studied the Mumuye figure's volumes in careful drawings made in his notebook of 1922-24 (*ibid.*; see p. 595 et. seq. for further discussion).



46

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

KOM MASK, CAMEROON

Height: 17 in (43.1 cm)

PROVENANCE

René Rasmussen, Paris

Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired from the above
in the early 1970s

\$ 10,000-15,000



47

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**BAMILEKE MASK, GRASSFIELDS,
CAMEROON**

Height: 13 in (33 cm)

PROVENANCE

John J. Klejman, New York
Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired from the above
in the early 1970s

\$ 8,000-12,000



AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**BAMILEKE-BANGWA FIGURE
OF A KING, FONTEM VALLEY,
GRASSFIELDS, CAMEROON**

Height: 37 1/4 in (94.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Jean-Michel Huguenin, Paris, acquired *in situ* in 1967
Charles Ratton, Paris, presumably acquired from the above
Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired from the above
by the early 1970s

PUBLISHED

Pierre Harter, *Arts anciens du Cameroun*, Arnouville, 1986, p.
307, figs. 343-344

\$ 60,000-90,000



Fontem is the most important of the nine Bangwa chiefdoms in the westernmost part of the area designated as Bamileke in the Grassfields region of present-day Cameroon, and is the origin of some of the most celebrated sculptures in the entire corpus of Sub-Saharan African Art. Major figural sculptures made throughout the Bamileke-Bangwa region are called *lefem*, and represent Bangwa chiefs, depicted wearing ceremonial dress with rich regalia including ivory bracelets, beaded collars and necklaces, and chiefly headwear. In the Fontem Valley a surrounding region, a style emerged in the 19th century which is particularly well-represented in canonical museum collections of African Art, rightly celebrated for its high degree of refinement, textural expressiveness, and formal dynamism. Rendering the human form in an unflinching, expressive sculptural style, they emphasize the personality and attributes of a particular *fon*, or king. The *fon* of a particular chiefdom was endowed with both civic and sacred power, and his position was both political and religious. Departed members of the lineage of the *fon* were

venerated ancestors, represented by *lefem*, which were stylistically idiosyncratic and bore features specific to their subject.

The present figure was acquired in 1967 in Cameroon by the French dealer Jean-Michel Huguenin, and was published in Pierre Harter's monograph *Arts anciens du Cameroun*, in 1986. It appears there adjacent to perhaps the most famous work of Cameroon art, the so-called "Bangwa Queen", which was photographed in 1933 by Man Ray and was formerly in the Helena Rubinstein and Harry Franklin collections (Sotheby's, New York, *The Harry A. Franklin Family Collection of African Art*, April 21, 1990, lot 127). Harter suggests that the present sculpture 'corresponds' to the Rubinstein figure, and indeed it bears the same style of collar and necklace, and is morphologically quite similar in the treatment of the legs, body, and arms.



49

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**BAMILEKE-BANGWA HEADDRESS FOR
THE NIGHT SOCIETY, GRASSFIELDS,
CAMEROON**

Height: 19 1/2 in (49.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Harry A. Franklin, Beverly Hills, acquired in the 1970s
Valerie B. Franklin, Beverly Hills, acquired by descent from the
above
Sotheby's, New York, *The Harry A. Franklin Family Collection of
African Art*, April 21, 1990, lot 196
Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired at the above
auction

PUBLISHED

Tamara Northern, *Expressions of Cameroon Art: The Franklin
Collection*, Los Angeles, 1986, p. 66, cat. no. 59

EXHIBITED

Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, *Expressions of
Cameroon Art: The Franklin Collection*, February 1 – November 15,
1986; additional venues: The Baltimore Museum of Art, June 1 –
September 6, 1987; The Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College,
Hanover, New Hampshire, October 5, 1987 – January 3, 1988;
The Dayton Art Institute, June 6 – September 4, 1988; The Flint
Institute of Arts, October 3, 1988 – January 8, 1989; The Palo Alto
Cultural Center, October 7 – December 31, 1989

\$ 6,000-9,000



50

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**KOTA-OBAMBA RELIQUARY
GUARDIAN FIGURE, GABON**

Height: 18 in (45.7 cm)

PROVENANCE

Charles Ratton, Paris
Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired from the above by
the early 1970s

\$ 5,000-7,000



51

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**LUBA FEMALE HALF FIGURE,
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

Height: 18 in (45.7 cm)

PROVENANCE

John J. Klejman, New York
Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired from the above
by the early 1970s

• \$ 50,000-70,000





Female beauty and power is the pervasive theme of much of the artwork of the classical Luba Kingdom of Central Africa. According to Mary Nooter Roberts and Allen F. Roberts: "Luba people say that only a woman's body is strong enough to contain a powerful spirit like a king's, so sculpture dedicated to kingship is almost always female in gender." (*Memory: Luba Art and the Making of History*, 1996, p. 42) Elaborate hairstyles and complex patterns of scarification on female figures are representative of those actually borne by high-ranking Luba individuals, and fleshy, youthful physiognomy is depicted with flowing, fluid lines and gracefully rounded surfaces.

The depiction of beauty in Luba Art is of moral and religious significance. Like other Central African sculptural traditions, a figural sculpture was thought to be a locus where a spirit might temporarily settle; for the Luba in particular, the beauty of the sculpture would attract desirable spirits, as would a rich assortment of

accoutrements, as in the present figure. The present figure poses in a quiet gesture of reverence, with her hands upon her breasts, and heavily-lidded eyes closed or looking downwards, present in the physical world but connected to the world of spirits.

The highly refined sculpture of the Luba has been admired in the West since the 19th century. Roberts and Roberts further note that "Because of resonances with European notions of value and 'elegance', Luba artistic forms have been celebrated among the greatest of African artistic traditions." (*Luba*, 2007, p. 12).

For a statue of closely related facial features see a Luba female statue in the British Museum, London (inv. no. 1910-441, accessioned in 1910, Roberts and Roberts 1997: 84, cat. 31).





52

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**BUYU AMULET, DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

Height (of the head, without leather strip): 3 1/2 in (9 cm)

PROVENANCE

Jacques Blanckaert, Brussels
Private Collection, acquired by descent from the above
Sotheby's, Paris, December 11, 2013, lot 84, consigned by the
above
Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired at the above
auction

PUBLISHED

Princeton University Art Museum, ed., *Surfaces Seen and Unseen* [Exhibition Checklist], Princeton, 2016, p. 8

EXHIBITED

Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, New Jersey,
Surfaces Seen and Unseen, July 2 – October 9, 2016

\$ 6,000-9,000

53

AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**LUBA-SHANKADI STAFF,
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF THE CONGO**

Height: 37 1/8 in (94.3 cm); Height of figure: 6 1/2 in (16.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

John J. Klejman, New York
Austin Newton, Princeton, New Jersey, acquired from
the above by the early 1970s

\$ 4,000-6,000



AFRICAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON

**THE AFRICAN ART LIBRARY
OF DR. AUSTIN NEWTON**

Comprising approximately 1,000 books, auction catalogues,
magazines, and journals.

II \$ 4,000-6,000





55

PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF LOIS
FRANKEL, TEXAS

**BAMANA ZOOMORPHIC
DOORLOCK, MALI**

Height: 16 5/8 in (42.2 cm)

\$ 6,000-9,000



56

PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

ASANTE FIGURE, GHANA

Height: 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ in (20 cm)

PROVENANCE

American Private Collection, acquired by the early 1970s

\$ 800-1,200



57

WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF RENÉ D'HARONCOURT
FROM THE ESTATE OF JOSEPH J. RISHEL

ASANTE STOOL, GHANA

Width: 21 in (53.3 cm); Height: 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ in (31.8 cm)

PROVENANCE

René d'Harnoncourt, New York, acquired in London in 1946
Anne d'Harnoncourt, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from
the above
Joseph J. Rishel, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from the
above

\$ 800-1,200





58

PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF LOIS FRANKEL, TEXAS

BAGA OR NALU HEADDRESS, GUINEA

Length: 63 in (160 cm)

PROVENANCE

John J. Klejman, New York
Acquired from the above by the early 1970s

\$ 15,000-25,000



59

PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF SARA ROOSEVELT WILFORD, NEW YORK

**YAURE MASK, CÔTE D'IVOIRE,
POSSIBLY BY KUAKUDILI**

Height: 15 in (38 cm)

The reverse with a printed label: "MATHIAS KOMOR WORKS OF
ART NEW YORK", inscribed in (faded) black ink: "E.417"

PROVENANCE

Mathias Komor, New York (inv. no. E.417)
Sara Roosevelt Wilford, New York, presumably acquired from the
above

\$ 7,000-10,000



60

PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF LOIS FRANKEL, TEXAS

**MINIANKA OR SENUFO MASK,
MALI OR CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

Height: 13 in (33 cm)

The reverse with a paper label printed: "RATTON PARIS"

PROVENANCE

Charles Ratton, Paris

Acquired from the above in 1971

\$ 3,000-5,000



61

PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF LOIS FRANKEL, TEXAS

SENUFO MASK, CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Height: 10 3/4 in (27.3 cm)

The reverse with a paper label printed: "RATTON PARIS"

PROVENANCE

Charles Ratton, Paris

Acquired from the above in 1971

\$ 3,000-5,000



62

PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**SENUFO BOWL-BEARER FIGURE,
CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

Height: 11 1/4 in (28.6 cm)

PROVENANCE

Galerie Présence des Arts, Paris
American Private Collection, acquired from the above on March
30, 1968

\$ 10,000-15,000



63

**DJIMINI OR LIGBE HEDDLE PULLEY,
CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

Height: 7 in (17.9 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, New York

Acquired from the above

\$ 6,000-9,000



64

PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF LOIS FRANKEL, TEXAS

DAN-GIO OR MANO MASK, LIBERIA

Height: 9 in (22.9 cm)

The reverse with a paper label printed: "RATTON PARIS"

PROVENANCE

Charles Ratton, Paris

Acquired from the above in 1971

\$ 5,000-7,000



65

AFRICAN SCULPTURE FROM THE COLLECTION OF GEORGE GERSHWIN

BAULE FIGURE, CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Height: 20 in (50.8 cm)

The reverse with a paper label printed: "RATTON PARIS"

PROVENANCE

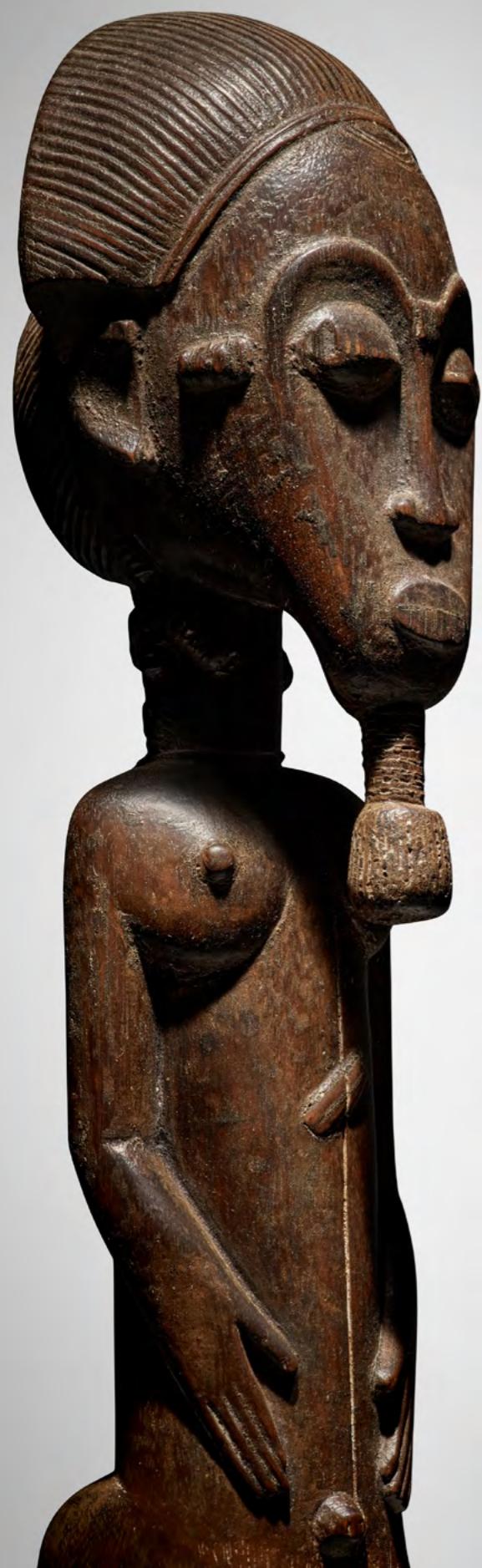
Charles Ratton, Paris

George Gershwin, New York, acquired from the above between 1929 and 1936

By descent from the above

\$ 20,000-30,000





66

PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

BAULE FIGURE, CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Height: 17 in (43.2 cm)

PROVENANCE

American Private Collection, acquired by the early 1970s

\$ 8,000-12,000



67

PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**BAULE HEDDLE PULLEY,
CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

Height: 4 7/8 in (12.4 cm)

PROVENANCE

American Private Collection, acquired by the early 1970s

\$ 2,000-3,000



68

PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**GURO HEDDLE PULLEY,
CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

Height: 5 1/2 in (14 cm)

The reverse with an old paper label inscribed in faded black ink: "Zouénoula", and with another word faintly visible but undeciphered.

PROVENANCE

Maître Etienne Ader, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, March 14, 1963,
lot 110
American Private Collection, acquired by the early 1970s

\$ 4,000-6,000



69

PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF ISADORE AND NANCY MARDER

**BAULE MALE AND FEMALE COUPLE,
CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

Height of male figure: 19 3/8 in (49.2 cm); Height of female figure:
19 in (48.3 cm)

PROVENANCE

Albert F. Gordon, New York
Isadore and Nancy Marder, Merion Station, Pennsylvania, acquired
from the above on March 18, 1972

\$ 8,000-12,000



70

PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK

IGALA HELMET MASK, NIGERIA

Height: 13 in (33 cm)

PROVENANCE

European Private Collection
Sotheby's, New York, May 15, 2003, lot 34, consigned by the
above
Private Collection, New York, acquired at the above auction

\$ 12,000-18,000



□ 71

PROPERTY FROM AN AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTION

**BAMILEKE BEADED HELMET MASK,
GRASSFIELDS, CAMEROON**

Length: 52 1/2 in (133.4 cm)

PROVENANCE

American Private Collection

\$ 2,000-3,000



72

AFRICAN SCULPTURE FROM THE COLLECTION OF GEORGE GERSHWIN

**FANG RELIQUARY GUARDIAN
FIGURE, GABON**

Height: 14 in (35.6 cm)

PROVENANCE

George Gershwin, New York, acquired between 1929 and 1936

Thence by descent from the above

\$ 20,000-30,000



This small Fang figure was acquired by the great American composer George Gershwin between 1929 and 1936, a time when Fang (then most often called "Pahouin") sculpture enjoyed a particular vogue among avant-garde American collectors, with the 1932 exhibition of Paul Guillaume's collection at the Durand-Ruel Gallery in New York (*Early African Heads and Statues from the Gabon Pahouin Tribes*), and the historic *African Negro Art* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1935. In January of the following year, the painter, collector, and theorist John D. Graham organized the pioneering *Exhibition of Sculptures of Old African Civilizations*, to which George Gershwin was a lender, at the Jacques Seligmann Gallery in New York. The slim catalogue that accompanied the exhibition contains Graham's lapidary observations on the qualities he perceived in African sculpture. Of the "Pahouin Civilization", Graham observed "an art – justly called classical. Its abstractions are the result of profound and final argumentation." (John D. Graham, *Exhibition of Sculpture of Old African Civilizations*, New York, 1936, p. 10). Graham viewed Fang sculpture as "classical" because he believed it to be "an art that has finally formulated and realized its plastic aspirations, an art, in short, that is definitely poised [...]" (*ibid.*, p. 7).

While Graham was concerned with a purely aesthetic approach, the plastic qualities of Fang sculpture exemplify

deeper cultural meanings, several of which are embodied in this sculpture. The rounded head of this figure is of "classical" form, with a slightly downcast and almost quiescent face that bears a deeply meditative expression, which embodies the Fang qualities of *nlem mmore*, or composure, and *mwwaa*, or tranquil equilibrium. The abrasions to the nose and the mouth are evidence of ritual scrapings which "were intentionally wrought upon such works throughout their ritual lives." (Alisa LaGamma, ed., *Eternal Ancestors: The Art of the Central African Reliquary*, New York, 2007, p. 208). The sense of introspective containment is also conveyed in the body of the sculpture, with the rounded masses of the shoulders and arms clasped tightly to the torso, and the hands held together in a votive gesture below the heart. The clear delineation of the joints of the shoulders, arms, and legs denotes the transition from one generation of ancestors to the next (J. W. Fernandez, *Bwiti: An Ethnography of the Religious Imagination in Africa*, Princeton, 1982, p. 88).

Although the precise source of this sculpture is not recorded, its style corresponds closely with that of a reliquary figure acquired in Paris in the 1930s by the Swiss collector Josef Mueller (see Christie's, London, *The Collection of the Late Josef Mueller, of Solothurn, Switzerland [...]. Part II*, March 20, 1979, lot 138).



PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF LOIS FRANKEL, TEXAS

**KOTA-OBAMBA RELIQUARY
GUARDIAN FIGURE, GABON**

Height: 24 1/2 in (62.2 cm)

The reverse with a printed label: "MATHIAS KOMOR
WORKS OF ART NEW YORK", inscribed in black ink: "6 464"

PROVENANCE

Mathias Komor, New York (inv. no. 6. 464)
Paul Breslow, New York, acquired from the above
Pace Primitive and Ancient Art, New York, acquired from the
estate of the above
Acquired from the above

\$ 20,000-30,000

Louis Perrois, the scholar of the art of Gabon, has remarked upon the "classicism" of this type of Kota reliquary figure, which he attributes to the Kota-Obamba or -Ndumu, and which "have been found since the end of the nineteenth century in the upper Ogooué area" (Louis Perrois, *Kota*, Milan, 2012, p. 60).

This "classicism" is illustrated here by the formal rigour of the composition. The concave, oval face has vertical and horizontal axes composed of plates of brass, which are surrounded by copper strips arranged in diagonal and horizontal lines that draw one's eye to the centre of the sculpture, where the features are placed, with a triangular nose and horizontal crescent eyes executed in high relief. The crimped edges of the copper strips create the appearance of raised bands, which again draw the eye inwards. The crowning crescent and the curved "cheeks", or *abaa*, are encased in brass plates with striated bands around most of the perimeter, with a double band of

lozenge motifs at the base of the cheeks, a design that is reprise in the band that encircles the neck. The artist has exploited the chromatic qualities of contrasting different metals, with two strips of iron forming "tears" that run diagonally down from beneath either eye, and a spiral copper pendant beneath either cheek.

Alisa LaGamma writes of the appeal to Kota patrons of "the reflective properties of the metal surface. [...] The constantly changing effect of shimmering light on the polished metal surface was evocative of the play of light on water. This was an especially appropriate quality given that the ancestral realm was conceived of as a body of water." (Alisa LaGamma, ed., *Eternal Ancestors: The Art of the Central African Reliquary*, New York, 2007, p. 110).

For a similar Kota-Obamba sculpture, see the example once in the Frank Crowninshield collection and sold at Sotheby's, New York, *The Collection of Edwin and Cherie Silver*, November 13, 2017, lot 23.



74

PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION

**SONGYE-EKI FIGURAL NECKREST,
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

Height: 6 in (15.2 cm)

PROVENANCE

William Douglas McMillan and Helen Lucille Henry McMillan, acquired *in situ* between 1918-1930
Thence by descent
Acquired from the above

\$ 100,000-150,000



This rediscovered figural headrest is a sublime exemplar of Central African sculpture, long pre-dating abstract artistic concepts "discovered" in the West in the 20th century. It is a fusion of two great styles of Congolese sculpture: Luba and Songye. It takes the format of a luxurious and sacred status object, of a type which reached its apex in the pre-colonial Luba Kingdom. The body of the caryatid figure is formed with a surreal sculptural vocabulary that is distinctly Songye, however, both in morphology and in its sheer inventiveness. Large, flat, paddle-shaped feet are instantly recognizable as Songye, like those of their famous Power Figures (*nkisi*). The legs are short, fleshy, and charged, with a slight bend at the knee. Above the small suggestion of a rounded belly, the body becomes an abstract column, rising to support the lateral headrest in a pure geometric vertical without further description of figural features. At the back of the "neck" is a carefully formed aperture where a cord for carrying could be attached. The armless column therefore reads as the body of the figure, while the "head" is seemingly missing, or signified by the lateral "pillow". The sculptor may have intended an ingenious conceit connected to the function of the object: the sculpture becomes complete when the user rests their head upon it.

Sculptural headrests are used throughout Sub-Saharan Africa and in many other parts of the world as ceremonial objects with the functional purpose of supporting a person's head in repose. In many African traditions, the object takes the form of a lateral support resting atop the head of a standing figure (the female of which is known as a caryatid, the male as an atlantid, in ancient Greek and later Western art history). Beyond their functional purpose, these figural headrests carry rich artistic meaning and sacred significance: for their original owners, they could be objects of high status, regalia of royalty or other high-ranking individuals, and were often exquisitely-carved. In the canons of African Art, they are among the most highly prized objects and have iconic status, particularly in the classical art of the Congo River Basin. Artists such as the Master of the Cascading Coiffure, the Master of Mulango, and the Master of Buli created neckrests as tour-de-force showcases of their sculptural prowess.

The Luba used headrests during sleep for the practical purpose of preserving elaborate hair arrangements. According to François Neyt, "Among the Luba, as soon as night falls, the universe is peopled with spirits and beings who seem to fear the heat of the sun. These beings, good or evil, seem to take advantage of the nocturnal respite to communicate with humans. Dreams, therefore, are taken very seriously and often, for those who experience them, they are more real than the reality of everyday life. On some works, figures [...] watch over the resting person to protect him during the mysterious hours of the night. The dreamer also participates in a [state] that one could compare to a hallucination, a trance state, or a state of consciousness modified by a hallucinogenic drug [...] Recourse to a diviner priest is essential. The dreamer somehow participates in a second state in which man becomes receptive to a message from elsewhere." (François Neyt, *Luba. Aux sources du fleuve Congo*, Paris, 1993, p. 183).

While Luba examples are relatively numerous, figural Songye headrests are extremely rare. Two now-famous Songye headrests were among the earliest Songye artworks to be "discovered" by the outside world: one now on display in the Pavillon des Sessions at the Louvre (inv. no. 73.1986.1.3), and one sold in these rooms in 2013 (Sotheby's, Paris, June 18, 2013, lot 67) and again in 2021 (Sotheby's, Paris, November 30, 2021, lot 177). Both of these sculptures were collected by Captain F. Vandervelde before 1888, and published in 1892. At that time, the art of the Songye people was virtually unknown to the outside world with only a few works existing in German museums, which von Wissman had collected during his campaigns in the Eki and Northern Songye regions between 1881 and 1886 (François Neyt, *Songye: The Formidable Statuary of Central Africa*, Antwerp, 2004, p. 31). To 19th century observers, the appearance of these works sparked observations about the affinities between Sub-Saharan African culture and that of the Ancient Egyptians, where headrests were found in royal tombs, a connection which is still discussed today (see Diana Craig Patch and Alisa LaGamma, *The African Origin of Civilization: The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, vol. 79, no. 4, Spring, 2022, p. 34).





In the limited corpus of Songye neckrests, a well-known group are attributed to the Songye-Eki (or Beneki) style, as defined by François Neyt (*Songye: The Formidable Statuary of Central Africa*, Antwerp, 2004, pp. 308-312), and to a Nsapo-Nsapo master sculptor known as the Master of Eki (or Master of Beneki). Headrests by this artist or his workshops have been canonized by their accession to major museum collections in Europe and the United States throughout the 20th century: one is in the Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, Dresden (inv. no. 41950); three are in the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren (one acquired by Joseph Maes in Lusambo and published by him in *Les appuis-tête du Congo belge*, Tervuren, 1929, pl. VII, fig. 11); one from the Wellcome Collection is now in the British Museum, London (inv. no. Af1954,+23.1758); one is at the Fowler Museum at UCLA, Los Angeles (see William J. Dewey, *Sleeping Beauties: The Jerome L. Joss Collection of African Headrests at UCLA*, Los Angeles, 1993, p. 65, cat. no. 57; reportedly from a "Belgian Colonial Collection"; another from the Joss Collection at the Fowler seems to be by the workshop or a follower); one is at The Stanley Museum of Art, Iowa City (see Robbins and Nooter *African Art in American Collections, Survey*, 1989, Washington, D.C., 1989, p. 468, fig. 1205); one is in the Dallas Museum of Art (inv. no. 1969.S.189); one is in the Minneapolis Institute of Art (inv. no. 99.139.6); one is in The Detroit Institute of Arts (inv. no. 1983.27); one is in the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology

and Anthropology, Philadelphia (acquired from William O. Oldman of London, in 1912); and another is in the High Museum of Art, Atlanta (inv. no. 2002.309). Another of early provenance which relates to this corpus is in the Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia; it was acquired by Albert C. Barnes from Paul Guillaume in 1922 (inv. no. A187, see Paul Guillaume and Thomas Munro, *Primitive Negro Sculpture*, London, 1926, p. 21, cat. no. 3a).

The large, flat feet carved in high relief on the present headrest relate closely to the corpus of the so-called Master of Eki. However, the visionary artist who created the present example departed from that fleshy, rounded figural style and created an abstract concept of which only one other example is known: a neckrest from the collection of the Belgian artist-collector Jean-Willy Mestach (see Evan Maurer, *The Intelligence of Forms: An Artist Collects African Art*, Minneapolis, 1991, p. 81, cat. no. 60). The Mestach example bears smaller feet and a less elaborate "pillow" as compared with the present work, and poker-work circles dot the top (as in several of the Master of Eki examples). The early collecting dates for many of the Master of Eki works corroborate the family history through which we trace the ownership of the present headrest, which was acquired in the Congo by the American mining engineer William Douglas McMillan, who arrived in the region sometime after 1914, returning to the United States by 1930; this extraordinary neckrest remained in the McMillan family until its recent rediscovery.



75

PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION

**LUMBO MOTHER AND CHILD FIGURE,
GABON**

Height: 13 1/4 in (33.6 cm)

PROVENANCE

Possibly Paul Guillaume, Paris
Marius de Zayas, New York, possibly acquired from the above
John Quinn, New York, acquired from the above on September 16, 1918
American Art Association, New York, *The John Quinn Collection: Paintings and Sculptures of the Moderns*, February 9-12, 1927, lot 644
Rose Kirstein, New York, acquired at the above auction
Lincoln Kirstein, New York, and Weston, Connecticut, acquired from the above
Private Collection, acquired by descent from the above

PUBLISHED

Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr., and Norman Keyes, Jr., *Charles Sheeler: The Photographs*, Boston, 1987, pl. 1
Wendy A. Grossman, ed., *Man Ray, African Art, and the Modernist Lens*, Washington, D.C. and Minneapolis, 2009, p. 33, fig. 2.3 and p. 57
Yaëlle Biro, "The John Quinn Collection of African Art and Its Photographic Album by Charles Sheeler", *Tribal Art*, Special Issue No. 3, 2012, p. 44, fig. 43
Art & Antiques, February, 2013, cover
Khristaan D. Villela, "From Ivory Coast to the East Coast", *Pasatiempo: The [Santa Fe] New Mexican's Weekly Magazine of Arts, Entertainment & Culture*, April 26, 2013, p. 39
Yaëlle Biro, "African Art, New York, and the Avant-Garde", *African Arts*, Vol. 46, No. 2, Summer, 2013, p. 93, fig. 14
Charlotte Grand-Dufay, "Lumbo Statuary: A Refined Art Style Revealed in the Early Twentieth Century", *Tribal Art*, Vol. XIX, No. 4, [No. 77], Autumn, 2015, p. 114, figs. 1-2
Charlotte Grand-Dufay, *Les Lumbo. Un art sacré. bungeelé yi bayisi*, Paris, 2016, pp. 110-111, fig. 73 (a, b)
Kobena Mercer, *Alain Locke and the Visual Arts*, New Haven, 2022, p. 62, fig. 33

\$ 8,000-12,000

NEW YORK 1919: THE JOHN QUINN LUMBO MOTHER AND CHILD

Charlotte Grand-Dufay

A testimony of the subtle art of the Lumbo that was revealed at the beginning of the 20th century, this figure is one of the first examples of Lumbo art to appear in the United States, along with the figure in the Cincinnati Art Museum (inv. no. 1890.1545), which was collected in the 1880s by the trader Carl Steckelman.

The provenance of the present sculpture can be traced back to Marius de Zayas, the Mexican artist and dealer who was supplied with African sculptures by Paul Guillaume, the herald of the avant-garde and one of the first dealers and promoters of African art in Paris. This exceptional Lumbo sculpture was presented as a prestigious centrepiece in the opening plate of the now famous photo album of 1919 that immortalized the African art collection of John Quinn (1870-1924), "the man from New York", patron of Joseph Conrad and W. B. Yeats, and one of the great avant-garde collectors of the first quarter of the 20th century. In 1919 Quinn commissioned the Modernist painter and photographer Charles Sheeler (1883-1965) to photograph his collection of African sculptures in an album that contains 27 plates, which illustrate a total of 31 works of art. Three copies of the album were produced, but two are presumed lost; the sole remaining copy is in the Lane Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Lifted from ethnographic pictorial conventions and enhanced by the thoughtful play of light and shadow, this Lumbo mother and child appears, majestically, at the forefront of the image, along with five Baga, Baule, and Senufo sculptures from Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. The sculpture appears again, photographed alone, in plate VII of the album.

Imbued with spirituality, the standing mother rests her right hand on the head of her son, while in her other hand she holds a small vessel, a calabash gourd. Her hands full, she stands firmly on flexed legs. According to Fredrik Buytendijk, the preeminent specialist of Kongo gestures, her stance indicates a sense of duty. Indeed, among the

Kongo people, her posture would suggest a sense of powerful determination; she is roused and compelled to answer a specific calling.

The mother's majestic head is exaggerated in proportion to her body and legs, in keeping with the Bantu tradition. Her coiffure has a large, rounded crest which is unadorned save for a raised central ridge which ends in a point at the nape of the neck, while her temples are framed by finely carved kiss curls. These curls are an essential detail of Kongo sculpture and may be found on several figures, notably a Lumbo female figure that holds calabash vessels in either hand at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. no. 1978.412.296). The same motif is present on a sculpture which entered the collection of the Etnografiska museet, Stockholm, before 1900; on a figure holding calabashes that was acquired in 1905 by the Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin (inv. no. IIIC20277); and on a mask from the collection of Marceau Rivière (Sotheby's, Paris, *Collection Marceau Rivière*, June 18-19, 2019, lot 71).

The mother's features are characteristic of Lumbo sculpture, with her face framed by arched eyebrows carved in relief. The wings of the fine nose are rounded, and rest above full, pursed lips. Her prominent neck is adorned with small double-pointed keloid scarifications. Her shoulders are powerful, her chest is raised, and her stomach bears diamond-shaped scarification patterns, with two bands of crosshatched designs at the waist, either side of the prominent umbilicus, which is another Lumbo characteristic. The ritual sign of the diamond is an important symbolic element for all the cultures of the equatorial Atlantic coastal region of Africa, from Congo to Gabon. It is the primordial motif and founding mythical emblem of the people of the Ogooué basin, representing a gateway to both life and death, the female sex, and the origin of the world.



Charles Sheeler (1883-1965): plate from the "John Quinn Album of African Art", 1919, gelatin silver print. Private Collection.

Slightly parted, her legs rest on wide "rake"-like feet, in a style typical of Kongo sculpture. The neatly carved toenails reveal the hand of a great sculptor. The carved bands that adorn the mother's ankles and wrists symbolize both wealth and contact with the ancestors. Associated with healing and divination rites, the calabash vessels that the figure holds in her hand may hold remedies or powerful *lebika* ingredients, intended to repel a sorcerer or an enemy of society; this figure is a *nkisi mulebika*, which served as "medicine", reinforcing the social order of the community.

Distinguished by this gesture of an offering that honoured the ancestors, female figures that hold one or two calabash vessels are among the oldest known examples of Lumbo sculpture. Indeed, the figures in the Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin (inv. no. IIIC20277), and

the Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg (inv. no. C 1811) were acquired by 1905 and 1893 respectively. Like the present sculpture, those two figures are also characterized by their beautiful, fine-featured faces and their jewellery, including bracelets and anklets. The numerous similarities in the proportions, posture, coiffure, and double-point scarification of the present sculpture and the figure that holds calabash vessels in either hand at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. no. 1978.412.296) suggest that the two works may be the work of the same master sculptor. Published in my article in *Tribal Art* magazine in 2015 and in the monograph *Les Lumbu. un art sacré* in 2017, this mother and child figure reveals the masterful, refined and "classic" art of the Lumbo, part of the great tradition of Kongo culture. A Lumbo masterpiece by a great sculptor, this mother and child figure is in all respects a historic work.



□ 76

PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK

**KONGO-YOMBE MATERNITY
FIGURE, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF THE CONGO**

Height: 14 1/4 in (36.2 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection
Sotheby's, London, November 28 and 30, 1983, lot 147, consigned by the above
Private Collection, Brussels, acquired at the above auction
Sotheby's, London, July 11, 1988, lot 104, consigned by the above
Reynold C. Kerr, New York, acquired after the above auction
Merton D. Simpson, New York (inv. no. 4255), acquired from the above circa 1990
Loudmer, Paris, June 30, 1994, lot 369
French Trade, acquired after the above auction
Alain Naoum, Brussels, acquired from the above
Marc Leo Felix, Brussels, acquired from the above
Private Collection, Minnesota, acquired from the above circa 1996
Sotheby's, New York, November 18, 2000, lot 150, consigned by the above
Lucien van de Velde, Antwerp, acquired after the above auction
Private Collection, New York, acquired from the above on July 25, 2002

\$ 6,000-9,000

□ 77

PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK

**SONGYE FIGURE, DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

Height: 8 in (20.3 cm)

PROVENANCE

G. M. J. Lommen, Maastricht
Martha J. Ehrlich, Edwardsville, Illinois
Thomas Alexander, St. Louis, acquired from the above
John Giltsoff, London
Private Collection, New York, acquired from the above in December 1996

PUBLISHED

Allen Wardwell, *Three African Traditions: The Art of the Dogon, Fang and Songye*, Greenwich, Connecticut, 1999, p. 17, pl. 39

EXHIBITED

Bruce Museum, Greenwich, Connecticut, *Three African Traditions: The Art of the Dogon, Fang and Songye*, January 31 - April 18, 1999

\$ 3,000-5,000



WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF RENÉ D'HARONCOURT
FROM THE ESTATE OF JOSEPH J. RISHEL

NECKLACE, HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

Length (overall): 11 1/2 in (29.2 cm); Length (pendant): 4 1/2 in (11.4 cm)

Walrus ivory (*Odobenus rosmarus*)

PROVENANCE

René d'Harnoncourt, New York, acquired by the early 1960s
Anne d'Harnoncourt, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from the above
Joseph J. Rishel, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from the above

PUBLISHED

The Museum of Primitive Art, *Two Private Collections: Gertrud A. Mellon and René d'Harnoncourt*, New York, 1965, n.p., cat. no. 72 (listed)

EXHIBITED

The Museum of Primitive Art, New York, *Two Private Collections: Gertrud A. Mellon and René d'Harnoncourt*, November 29, 1965 - February 11, 1966

• \$ 40,000-60,000

Necklaces such as this, known as *lei niho palaoa*, were amongst the most valuable and highly prized of personal ornaments in the vast array of regalia and personal decoration available to the *ali'i*, the Hawaiian nobility. Adrienne Kaeppler has described them as "the most spectacular of all Hawaiian ornaments" (Adrienne L. Kaeppler, *Polynesia: The Mark and Carolyn Blackburn Collection*, Honolulu, 2010, p. 371), and according to David Malo, the Hawaiian historian, they were second in value and prestige only to feathered articles, such as the great cloaks, *'ahu 'ula*. Malo notes that the *ali'i* would wear their *lei niho palaoa*, like their cloaks, "in battle or on occasions of ceremony and display" (David Malo, *Hawaiian Antiquities*, Honolulu, 1903, p. 107).

Examples of the hook form pendants retrieved from archaeological contexts are often made of shell, coral, or calcite, amongst other materials, with marine ivory historically only available from beached whales. European and American whalers began to trade with the Hawaiians in earnest in the late 18th century, bringing large quantities of marine ivory in the form of whale teeth and walrus tusks. The greater availability of this material did not diminish its value amongst the *ali'i*, but rather led to a flourishing in the manufacture of pendants of greater size, drama, and beauty. No distinction whatsoever in value appears to have been drawn between pendants made of whale teeth

or walrus tusk, or indeed between *lei niho palaoa* made of these materials and certain rare and unusual examples made from elephant ivory brought from China.

The interpretation of the distinctive shape of *niho palaoa* remains uncertain. According to Cox and Davenport, its curving tongue-like shape represents the ultimate abstraction of the "protruding jaw-mouth-tongue" form found in *'aumakua* images of family gods or deified ancestors (J. Halley Cox and William H. Davenport, *Hawaiian Sculpture*, Honolulu, 1974, p. 42), a theory which perhaps indicates the genealogical connection between these deities and the aristocratic wearers of *lei niho palaoa*. The Hawaiian historian Lucia Jensen suggests that the pendants "represent [...] the *ho'aka* (crescent), which [...] symbolized the vessel of *mana*", or supernatural power (Lucia Jensen cited in Roger G. Rose, *Hawai'i: The Royal Isles*, Honolulu, 1980, p. 196).

The pendant itself is not the only vessel of *mana*. Human hair was considered sacred by Hawaiians, since the head was believed to be *tapu* and therefore captured the *mana* of the person to whom it belonged. The coils of exquisitely finely braided human hair from which the pendants are suspended are thus an equally remarkable and powerful part of these extraordinary objects.



79

PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION

STILT-STEP, MARQUESAS ISLANDS

Height: 13 1/8 in (33.3 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, acquired circa 1960

\$ 4,000-6,000



80

WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF RENÉ D'HARONCOURT
FROM THE ESTATE OF JOSEPH J. RISHEL

**POUNDER, TAHITI,
SOCIETY ISLANDS**

Height: 6 1/2 in (16.3 cm)

Inscribed in white ink: "N-3-8"

PROVENANCE

René d'Harnoncourt, New York, acquired on Long Island, New York, in 1944

Anne d'Harnoncourt, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from the above

Joseph J. Rishel, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from the above

\$ 2,000-3,000



WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF RENÉ D'HARNONCOURT
FROM THE ESTATE OF JOSEPH J. RISHEL

**LARGE VESSEL, TAHITI,
SOCIETY ISLANDS**

Length: 32 3/4 in (83.2 cm)

PROVENANCE

René d'Harnoncourt, New York, acquired by the early 1960s
Anne d'Harnoncourt, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from
the above
Joseph J. Rishel, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from the
above

PUBLISHED

The Museum of Primitive Art, ed., *Two Private Collections: Gertrud A. Mellon and René d'Harnoncourt*, New York, 1965,
n.p., cat. no. 71 (listed; origin given as "Hervey Islands"
[Southern Cook Islands])

EXHIBITED

The Museum of Primitive Art, New York, *Two Private Collections: Gertrud A. Mellon and René d'Harnoncourt*,
November 29, 1965 - February 11, 1966

\$ 8,000-12,000



82

PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK

TWO CLUBS, TONGA

Length: 32 in (81.3 cm), and 34 $\frac{7}{8}$ in (88.6 cm)

PROVENANCE

European Private Collection
Sotheby's, Paris, *Art Africain, Océanien et Précolombien*
[...] *Collection privée Européenne*, April 16, 2003, lot 164,
consigned by the estate of the above
Private Collection, New York, acquired at the above auction

\$ 2,000-3,000



83

POUNDER, PALAU

Height: 5 7/8 in (15 cm)

PROVENANCE

European Private Collection

\$ 3,000-5,000



84

**POUNDER, PULAP ATOLL,
CAROLINE ISLANDS**

Height: 5 7/8 in (15 cm)

PROVENANCE

European Private Collection

\$ 4,000-6,000





85

WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF RENÉ D'HARONCOURT
FROM THE ESTATE OF JOSEPH J. RISHEL

**KANAK BIRD-HEAD CLUB,
NEW CALEDONIA**

Length: 28 1/4 in (71.8 cm)

PROVENANCE

Darthea Speyer, Paris
René d'Harnoncourt, New York, acquired as a gift from the
above in 1954
Anne d'Harnoncourt, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from
the above
Joseph J. Rishel, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from the
above

\$ 1,000-1,500

86

WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF RENÉ D'HARONCOURT
FROM THE ESTATE OF JOSEPH J. RISHEL

**WAR CLUB, MALAITA, SOLOMON
ISLANDS**

Length: 32 3/4 in (83.2 cm)

PROVENANCE

René d'Harnoncourt, New York, acquired by the early 1960s
Anne d'Harnoncourt, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from
the above
Joseph J. Rishel, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from the
above

PUBLISHED

*The Museum of Primitive Art, Two Private Collections:
Gertrud A. Mellon and René d'Harnoncourt*, New York, 1965,
n.p., cat. no. 66 (listed)

EXHIBITED

*The Museum of Primitive Art, New York, Two Private
Collections: Gertrud A. Mellon and René d'Harnoncourt*,
November 29, 1965 - February 11, 1966

\$ 800-1,200



PROPERTY FROM THE COLLECTION OF JERRY AND ILENE LIEBOWITZ

**FIGURE OF A SUPERNATURAL BEING,
NENDÖ (SANTA CRUZ), SANTA CRUZ
ISLANDS, SOLOMON ISLANDS**

Height: 6 3/8 in (16.2 cm)

PROVENANCE

Deacon Clement Daagi, acquired in the village of Nea, Nendö, in 1958
William H. Davenport, Philadelphia, acquired from the above in 1959
Christie's, London, November 28, 1984, lot 90, consigned by the above
William A. McCarty-Cooper, New York, acquired at the above auction
Christie's, New York, *Important Tribal Art and Antiquities from the Collection of William A. McCarty-Cooper*, 19 May 1992, lot 27, consigned by the estate of the above
Jerry and Ilene Liebowitz, Fort Lee, New Jersey, acquired at the above auction

PUBLISHED

William H. Davenport, "Lyric Verse and Ritual in the Santa Cruz Islands", *Expedition*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1975, p. 46
Allan Hanson and Louise Hanson, eds., *Art and Identity in Oceania*, Honolulu, 1990, p. 100, fig. 9.4
William H. Davenport, *Santa Cruz Island Figure Sculpture and Its Social and Ritual Contexts*, Philadelphia, 2005, pp. 212-213, pl. 52

\$ 15,000-25,000



The figurative sculpture of Nendö, or Santa Cruz Island, in the eastern Solomon Islands, is comprised of a small corpus of fifty or so sculptures that "resemble the human body, and [which] can be categorized as sacred icons that depict deities [dukna] or other supernatural beings in the religious and mythic domains of Nendö culture." (William H. Davenport, *Santa Cruz Island Figure Sculpture and Its Social and Ritual Contexts*, Philadelphia, 2005, p. 1).

The present figure was formerly in the collection of the anthropologist William H. Davenport, who over the course of several decades spent considerable time on Nendö. He was given this figure in 1959 by Deacon Clement Daagi of the Anglican Melanesian Mission, who informed him that it represents a *leimuba*, a benevolent type of supernatural being which lives in seclusion deep in the rainforest. Davenport records that "Humans could never find [leimuba] even if they tried." The *leimuba* are "shrouded in mystery. They cannot be summoned by prayer, but individual *leimuba* might suddenly appear to a human and bestow a good luck token of some kind or possibly a roll of valuable red-feather money, then, just as suddenly, disappear." (*ibid.*, p. 14).

The *leimuba*'s benevolent character is reflected in the delightful style of this charming object, which is itself the type of token or charm that a *leimuba* might deliver to a deserving mortal. The diminutive, round-headed

supernatural is richly attired, with a finely woven loincloth, beaded anklets, and other ornaments, including a small shell which represents a conch, "a symbol of renown, because wealthy and important men (and supernaturals are these even more than mortals) are associated with the blowing of a conch which always announces the purchase of valuable commodities." (William H. Davenport, "Lyric Verse and Ritual in the Santa Cruz Islands", *Expedition*, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 46). All *leimuba* are thought to be male, "and no one is certain whether there are females or whether they reproduce and whether they are immortal like *dugna*" (William H. Davenport, *Santa Cruz Island Figure Sculpture [...]*, Philadelphia, 2005, p. 15). Davenport states, "Santa Cruz men deny that male carvers ever made images of the *leimuba*; all tokens received from *leimuba* are believed to have been fabricated by them." (*ibid.*, p. 212).

The surface of this sculpture was once covered in turmeric, which the people of Nendö believed contained supernatural properties, and which was ritually applied to "sacred objects in order to sacralize them." (*ibid.*, p. 11). Although figures of tutelary deities, or *munga dukna*, were venerated on altars, a figure of a supernatural *leimuba* such as this would have been kept hidden in a secret place "until the owner wished to use it or speak to it, hoping to attract the attention of a *leimuba* who might make him a present of feather currency." (*ibid.*, p. 212).



WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF RENÉ D'HARNONCOURT FROM
THE ESTATE OF JOSEPH J. RISHEL

PLATTER, EFATE, VANUATU

Length: 32 1/8 in (81.6 cm)

The reverse with a paper label with a typewritten
inscription: "d'H. 215.61"

PROVENANCE

René d'Harnoncourt, New York, acquired by the early 1960s
Anne d'Harnoncourt, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from

the above

Joseph J. Rishel, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from the
above

PUBLISHED

The Museum of Primitive Art, ed., *Two Private Collections:
Gertrud A. Mellon and René d'Harnoncourt*, New York, 1965,
n.p., cat. no. 68 (listed)

EXHIBITED

The Museum of Primitive Art, New York, *Two Private
Collections: Gertrud A. Mellon and René d'Harnoncourt*,
November 29, 1965 - February 11, 1966

\$ 1,000-1,500



89

PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT EAST COAST COLLECTION

**ABELAM FIGURE, PRINCE
ALEXANDER MOUNTAINS,
EAST SEPIK PROVINCE,
PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

Height: 43 in (109.2 cm)

PROVENANCE

George Kennedy, Los Angeles, collected *in situ* in the 1960s
Christie's, Los Angeles, February 14, 1981, lot 68, consigned
by the estate of the above

Norman Lear, Los Angeles, acquired at the above auction
Sotheby's, New York, November 19, 1999, lot 178, consigned
by the above

Acquired at the above auction

\$ 6,000-9,000



90

PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT EAST COAST COLLECTION

BARK BELT, GULF OF PAPUA, GULF PROVINCE, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Width: 12 $\frac{5}{8}$ in (32.1 cm)

PROVENANCE

Anthony J. P. Meyer, Galerie Meyer, Paris

Acquired from the above in October 1998

\$ 1,500-2,500



91

WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF RENÉ D'HARNONCOURT
FROM THE ESTATE OF JOSEPH J. RISHEL

**MASK, COASTAL SEPIK RIVER,
EAST SEPIK PROVINCE,
PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

Height: 11 1/8 in (28.3 cm)

PROVENANCE

René d'Harnoncourt, New York, acquired as a gift in 1945
from "Louis", probably Louis Pierre Ledoux, New York
Anne d'Harnoncourt, Philadelphia, acquired by descent
from the above
Joseph J. Rishel, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from
the above

PUBLISHED

The Museum of Primitive Art, *Two Private Collections: Gertrud A. Mellon and René d'Harnoncourt*, New York, 1965, n.p., cat. no. 64 (listed)

EXHIBITED

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, *Art of the South Seas*, January 29 - May 19, 1946
The Museum of Primitive Art, New York, *Two Private Collections: Gertrud A. Mellon and René d'Harnoncourt*, November 29, 1965 - February 11, 1966

\$ 1,000-1,500



92

WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF RENÉ D'HARNONCOURT
FROM THE ESTATE OF JOSEPH J. RISHEL

HAND CLUB, GUYANA

Length: 15 1/8 in (38.4 cm)

Inscribed in white ink: "N-3-47"

PROVENANCE

René d'Harnoncourt, New York, acquired by the early 1960s
Anne d'Harnoncourt, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from
the above
Joseph J. Rishel, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from the
above

\$ 600-900



93

WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF RENÉ D'HARNONCOURT FROM
THE ESTATE OF JOSEPH J. RISHEL

**TWO GOANNAS (LIZARDS), GROOTE
EYLANDT, AUSTRALIA**

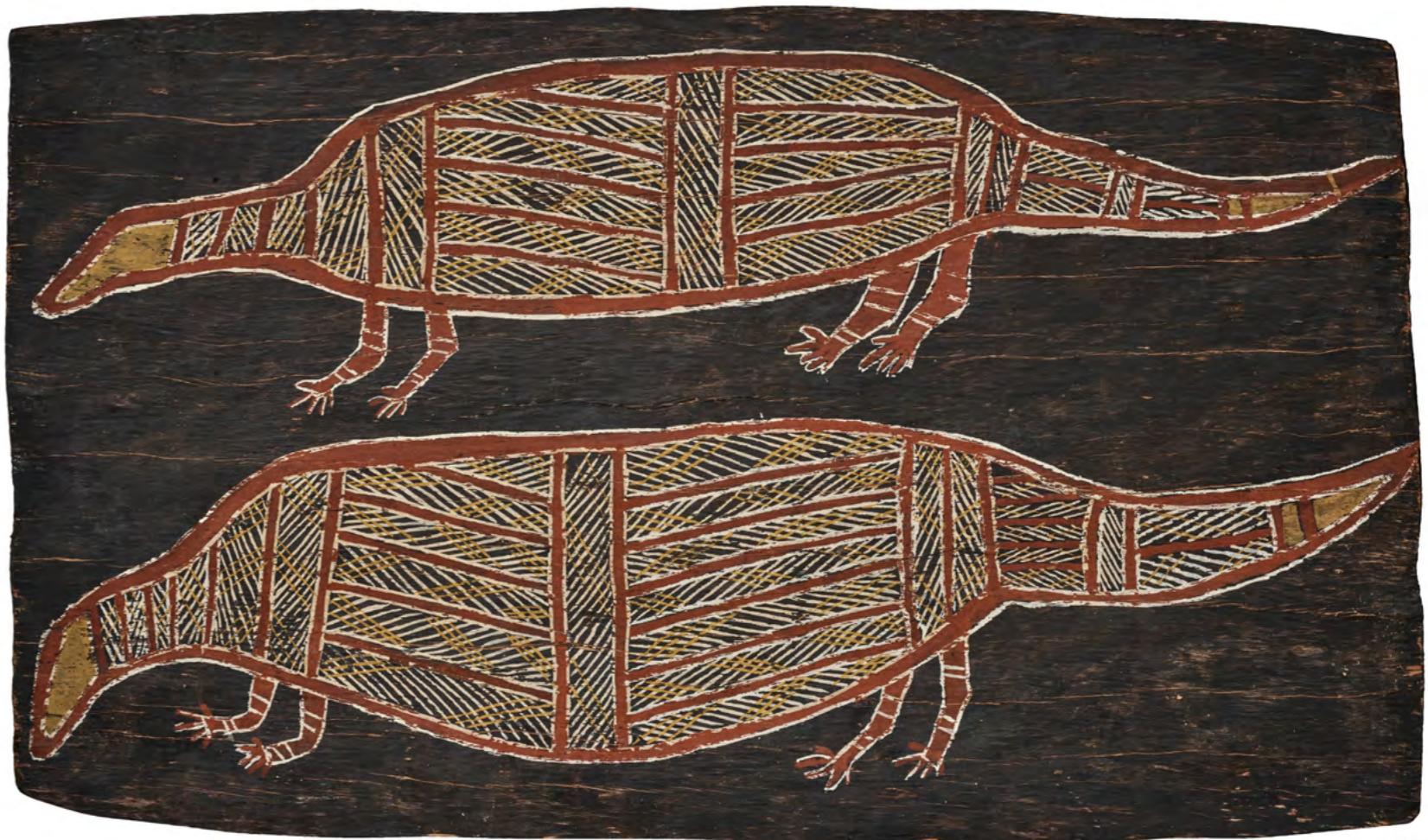
Circa 1960

Length: 36 in (91.4 cm)

PROVENANCE

René d'Harnoncourt, New York, acquired by the early 1960s
Anne d'Harnoncourt, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from the
above
Joseph J. Rishel, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from the above

\$ 2,000-3,000



WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF RENÉ D'HARNONCOURT FROM
THE ESTATE OF JOSEPH J. RISHEL

**THE SAW-FISH, DJUN-GUNDAGMUN,
OENPELLI, WESTERN ARNHEM LAND,
AUSTRALIA**

Circa 1948

Length: 27 3/4 in (70.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Executed at Oenpelli, Western Arnhem Land, during The American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land in 1948 Charles P. Mountford, Adelaide

René d'Harnoncourt, New York, acquired as a gift from the above by the end of the 1940s

Anne d'Harnoncourt, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from the above

Joseph J. Rishel, Philadelphia, acquired by descent from the above

PUBLISHED

Charles P. Mountford, *Records of the American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land, Vol. 1: Art, Myth and Symbolism*, Melbourne, 1956, p. 254, and p. 261, pl. 83, fig. 3

\$ 3,000-5,000

END OF SALE

